الا بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب

The Golden Chain of Transmission

MASTERS of the Naqshibandi way

Osman Nûri Topbaş

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Original Title: Altın Silsile

Author: Osman Nûri Topbaş

Translator: Özlem Şahin, Süleyman Derin

Redactor: Amjad Mahmud Hussain

Graphics: Rasim Şakiroğlu

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Tel: (+90-212) 671-0700 pbx

Fax: (+90-212) 671-0748

E-mail: info@islamicpublishing.org

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PREFACE

Endless thanks and praise be to Allah, Most High, who created humankind upon the 'ahsan al taqwim' (the best of moulds), to be at the peak of all of creation, Who bestowed upon him the potential to reach a most lofty and elevated state, by breathing into him of His Spirit; Who showed us the direction to truth and goodness by sending us books and prophets to guide us; and who allowed this chain of spiritual guidance to continue via the scholars (alim) and knowers of Allah (arif), the heirs of the prophets.

Endless blessings and peace be upon the prophet Muhammad, the pride of the universe, the master of the prophets, unparalleled in his character, our greatest guide in this world and intercessor on the Day of Judgement, and also upon his pure ahl-al-bayt (family), his Companions and Followers.

When describing Himself to us our Lord, most often uses the Names *al-Rahman* (Most Merciful) and *al-Rahim* (Most Compassionate). His will is to be close to His creatures and as a product of this endless mercy He invites us to Paradise, or Dar al-Salam, the realm of peace and happiness.

The condition of acceptance of this invitation, however, is to live a life of servitude to Him in piety and with God-consciousness, to be His friend...

The expression used by the Beloved of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), that is, '*Rafiq al-Ala'*, the Greatest Companion, indicates an enthusiasm and eagerness to return to Him and has come to be the greatest desire for all the believers, the lovers of Allah and His Messenger.

We are in this world to sit for an examination to determine who will perform the best deeds. In this apparent land of separation, to be together with our Lord, in our hearts and in our spirits, to never forget Him for one instant,

and to constantly seek His pleasure, is the greatest etiquette required of our servitude to Him. Our reunion with His Beauty in the eternal realm will take place to the degree of our closeness to Him (in this world).

That is, our peace and happiness in both worlds is dependent on our closeness to our Lord. Consequently, we should engrave upon our hearts the following wisdom mentioned in the *Hikem-i Ataiyya*:

“O my Lord! What has the one who has found You lost and what has the one who has lost You really found?”

We should never forget that our hearts will only find peace when we are in constant remembrance of Allah.

Almighty Allah is with us in all places and at all times. Now the question remains – To what degree are we with Him?

However close the heart of a person is to Allah, his or her acts of worship will increase in their rank to that degree. The smallest of deeds done with awareness of being close to Allah gains a value as great as the mountains and in the same way nothing good will come of a deed done in ignorance of Allah. The prayer that such a heedless heart prays will lose its spirit, and will not be able to protect the person from major sins and from indecent acts. Charity given will be fruitless as it has become tainted with showing off and arrogance. Prayers and deeds will not remain unanswered nor unrequited, and any repentance made will lead to the need for more. Thus, in order to find the path to the Elevated presence of Allah, one must first lift the veil of one’s ego. Wise hearts have said:

“Once you remove your ego you are left with your Creator”.

This consciousness brings about the need for a spiritual maturity and development in the believer, to bring one to the horizons of ‘*maiyya’*, that is a state of constant togetherness with Allah. It is not possible to reach the peaks of spirituality with a raw and cumbersome heart. While the heart is in the darkness it cannot progress on the path to sublimity and light. This is why in the eyes of the gnostics and friends of Allah the aim in the creation of the human being is ‘the attainment of perfection and reunion with Beauty. Hence, in developing and maturing spiritually, one is able to attain the bounty of being able to witness the beauty of Allah.

In this respect spiritual purification, that is the act of cleansing oneself of negative traits and perfecting one's soul, is a common need of all human beings. Amongst all living creatures the human being is the only one born in need of spiritual training and purification.

Even though Allah has created the human being adorning him with such lofty characteristics such as, intelligence, perception, foresight and a conscience, these alone are not enough to bring a person to the truth and to goodness. Our Lord has also sent revealed books and prophets to show us how to use these bounties. By personally living by the truth found in the divine books, and thus spreading this truth and expanding and expounding on it, the prophets are the greatest 'teachers/trainers of humankind'. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) took an 'ignorant people' steeped in oppression, savagery, injustice and falsehood and purified and reformed them so that they came to be at the peak of a civilisation of good character and virtue; a community of 'the age of bliss'. In this way, ignorant and corrupt people became cultured; savage people were civilised; and criminals and base characters became pious. That is, these people came to possess extraordinarily righteous and tender hearts, and lived with the love and fear of Allah.

Consider a person with a heart so hardened and so savage that he was able to bury his baby daughter alive... an oppressor who considered his slave to be a mere possession and believed him worthy of the most inhumane of treatment... it was such crude and ignorant people who underwent prophetic training, having taken their share of the goodness from his heart, who then brought about a civilisation of virtues, knowledge, good character and manners.

In order to understand just how this amazing revolution and transformation of the spirit took place, it is necessary to examine closely the prophetic method of training. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were with their sincere faith able to benefit from the prosperity and spirituality in their dialogue with the prophet (peace be upon him). The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) educated his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) by conversing with them. This is called *suhbah* and is a method conducted face to face and heart to heart. A powerful effect could be felt by the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) not only in the words, acts and motions of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), but also within

his ‘state’, reflected upon his beautiful face, felt but not spoken. Just as the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) benefitted from this closeness and from the blessed words of the prophet, they also benefitted from these kinds of ‘states’ in accordance with their capacity. This benefit was the flow of prosperity from heart to heart. As a result of the reflection and the transferral that came from the closeness and the conversation with the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), his state was passed onto them and they took their share, to various degrees, of becoming like him.

These elevated characters were subjected to a chain of blessings, transcending time and place, transferred from one generation to the next via those worthy of transferring it.

Our need for the prophets to teach us the divine truths and apply them is absolute, and so in their absence there have always been competent scholars, gnostics, righteous men and saints who have continued this duty of guiding others in accordance with their capacity and strength for spiritual education.

It is said in a hadith:

“The scholars (those who have completed their outer and inner training and have turned their knowledge into wisdom) are the heirs of the prophets” (Abu Dawud, Ilim, 1).

The *Murshid-i Kamil* (perfected guides) are:

The one who knows of Allah, thy are righteous and perfect believers who have combined both the outer and the inner of religion and embroidered it upon their hearts, whose hearts have advanced in the path of *zuhd* and *taqwa*, have attained perfection in their behaviour and have attained the honour of being the heirs of the prophets; have tasted the pleasure of faith and reached depth in their emotions having expanded their perception and comprehension to both worlds; put all of their efforts into freeing people from their evil traits and the pits of the darkness of their *nafs* and allowed them to reach the peak of good character and spiritual maturity.

These blessed people, who have transcended time, are representatives of prophetic guidance and good behaviour.. That is, they are models for those who did not have the honour of seeing the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) or his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), whose guid-

ance is worthy of being followed. Their guidance and advice reflect the words and counsel of the Messenger of Allah. The centre of spiritual benefit of that *suhbah* is the Messenger of Allah.

Just like the moon takes its light from the sun, the Friends of Allah are like mirrors that reflect the beauty of the prophetic character. This is why those who observe their state and behaviour with a gentle and loving heart will witness the subtle manifestations of prophetic character.

Endless praise and thanks be to Allah who allowed us to benefit, in these end of times, from the Messenger of Allah's task of purification of the heart and refining of the *nafs* which took form over 14 centuries and was transferred from generation to generation through the path of spiritual succession in the Golden Chain.

It is due to the spiritual blessings of that Chain that we are able to smell the rose scent from that Age of Bliss.

The Golden Chain is a current of spiritual energy that has linked itself to an invisible line of love and that has reached us today, transferred from heart to heart.

It expresses, beyond time and place, the ecstasy of the heart, spiritual wakefulness and vitality that closeness to the righteous brings about.

It is an obvious truth that the perception of the human being has a difficult time in understanding isolated truths. Human beings are ever in need of embodied examples, and tangible models. This is why people admire and will imitate and follow model personalities who embody these spiritual truths in their state and behaviour.

The lives of these Perfect Guides, their '*sayr u suluq'* of having passed through their spiritual training and being given the duty of guiding others, are filled with lessons from which we can take heed, whether it be from periods in which they were in training or when they were training others. To take heed from their stories, to listen to their wise advice, to deeply contemplate on their profound states will undoubtedly benefit our correct understanding of aspects of Islam such as *zuhd* (abstention), *ihsan*[1], *khushu* (deep reverence), *taqwa*

1. *Ihsan* is a state of being which is defined by the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) as follows: 'It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, for even though you do not see Him, He sees you (translator's note)'

(God-consciousness), *rabbaniyya* (godliness), *ruhaniyyah* (spirituality), that is, in short TASAWWUF.

True tasawwuf is like a clear mirror that will reflect the Messenger of Allah's beautiful character and elevated state, transferring it to succeeding generations until the end of time.

This book that you carry in your hand is a humble but important step in attempting to describe the model of the *insan-i kamil* (the perfected human being).

I have attempted to emphasise matters of knowledge, good character and wisdom, rather than chronological and academic information about our prophet's life or the lives of the great shaykhs that make up the Golden Chain, so that everyone can take as their model these examples according to his or her ability.

All prosperity and beauty found in the book are lofty reflections of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his true heirs, the *ahlulallah* (people of Allah), that have reached us today from their pure hearts. Our task then, like the efforts of the bee that collects the nectar and pollen from the flower to fill its hive with honey, is to collect and gather these aspects of wisdom and present them to you, our precious readers.

I would like to present my most sincere respect, love, and prayers for the *ahlullah* whose names are mentioned in this book. I also thank all my academician friends, brothers and students who helped in the writing of this book, namely Dr Murat Kaya, M. Akif Gunay and I. Hakki Uzun, amongst others, and I pray that this service of theirs be accepted as *sadaqa-i jariya* (on-going charity) on their behalf.

Let us not forget that the principles of the friends of Allah are like stars for us. It is not possible for everyone to follow them completely. However, in accordance with the principle 'If you cannot achieve something completely, then you do not abandon that which you have achieved', we must act with the thought of approaching their state to the best of our ability. On reading their stories and advice we should not remain at the stage of merely admiring and appreciating them, but take one step further and observe our own states in their mirror. We should try to reform the faults that we see and correct our mistakes, and strive to make any similarities so that we may be like them.

Also, it has been said that 'Mercy descends where the righteous are remembered."[2.]

However, it is not enough for them to be remembered in words only; this would only be enough to allow Divine Mercy to fully manifest. What will allow the grace of Allah and endless prosperity to fully manifest would be the desire in the heart to strive to be like them. If we can read the stories and counsel of the people of Allah mentioned in this book, with such a spirit and eye of the heart, then by Allah's permission we can take our place in that eternal caravan. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said in a hadith:

"A person is with the one he loves." (Bukhari, Adab, 96)

The greatest proof of this oneness is the oneness of feeling and the thought and the uprightness in terms of one's state, attitude and behaviour. A love that does not lead to such a connection is doubtful.

May Allah bestow on our hearts love for those He loves! May the bonds of our hearts with them last forever. May He bestow drops of prosperity and expansion on our hearts from their hearts. May we be with the righteous in this world and be raised up with them in the next...

Amen!...

Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ

2012 / Uskudar

2. Abu Nuaym, Hilya, VII, 285.

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ
فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

"The one who knows his soul knows his Lord"

Tasawwuf

Tasawwuf is the art of knowing Allah with one's heart. It is a method of purification. It is the way to reach *taqwa* (God-consciousness) by shunning all things that distance oneself from Allah. It is a continual school of perfection in which the spirit is joyful. It is a battle with the *nafs* in which there can never be a truce; for the *nafs* is a strangely mysterious faculty that can only be trained via a major struggle. Tasawwuf is the code in the mystery of our examination; it contains the principles and standards in being a slave of Allah, and its spirituality and blessings flows in our veins.

With all its components tasawwuf is the training, educating and training of the *nafs,* bringing it under the command of the *ruh* (spirit). Tasawwuf is another name for raising '*iman'* to the lofty horizons of '*ihsan'* by thirstily drinking from the fountain of submission. It is the art of being able to remain a friend of Allah; of being able to be content with His decree at all times and in all places. It is mastery of a consistently beautiful servanthood, in which one forgets about complaining and whining and is able to maintain one's balance in the face of life's ups and downs, changing circumstances and surprises.

It is the effort of the believer to perfect his inner world, to turn towards creation with a selfless heart and it is the responsibility of trying to compensate for any needs and lack of compassion and kindness.

In short, tasawwuf is to be able to truly recognise the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) with love, to adopt his elevated character and morals, and to struggle to live one's religion in accordance with his spirituality.

TASAWWUF

Before moving on to discuss the matter of the noble Chain, it is first necessary to perceive what tasawwuf, which is the arena of the perfect guides, is, with an exact definition that includes everything that it is and is not. Otherwise it will not be possible to fully understand the people of tasawwuf and their teachers, or the Perfect Guides *(murshid-i kamil*).

The origins of tasawwuf

Tasawwuf is the aspect of Islam which focuses on the heart, on its essence and spirituality. It is a path of spiritual purification and perfection in which one tries to integrate the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) into every aspect of one's life. It is the spiritual and sincere aspect of all of the religions that Allah has sent down. It began with the breathing of the *ruh* into the prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and peaked with the last of the prophets Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and is now continually reflected onto the hearts of those filled with love.

The 'perfected human' model that Allah desires from us was displayed in the blessed character of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Just as in every stage of his life, Allah's Messenger constituted the best example (the *uswat al-hasana*), so too he was the best of 'educators' and 'purifiers'. As a prophet he had great many duties and he was given great authority. Amongst these the following four responsibilities take precedence:

1) Receiving divine revelation:

The receiving of the revelation which came about through Allah's will and favour was finally completed according to traditions with the verse: '**This day I have perfected for you your Religion (with all its rules, commandments and universality), completed My favour upon you, and have been pleased to assign for you Islam as religion'** (Ma'idah, 5:3).

Since the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was the 'seal of the prophets' this duty ended when he migrated to the eternal realm.

2) Explaining the rulings and truths of the verses revealed in the Qur'an with his words and his actions:

This authority of knowledge was continued by the *mujtahid* scholars who gave their *ijtihad* (rulings) in the face of newly-encountered matters using original and derived proofs. This situation brought about the *madhhabs* (schools of law).

3) The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)**had political and managerial authority in which he applied and kept alive the commands and prohibitions of the religion, establishing them and ordering them:**

This authority was taken on and continued by the caliphs (the *ulu'l amr)*.

4) With his command over the spirit the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) **trained and purified their inner worlds:**

The succession of this duty and licence of the prophet from generation to generation constitutes the foundation of tasawwuf. Just as it is of the essence that all of the duties, apart from that of receiving revelation, were taken up and continued by those who followed him, it is also necessary that his duty of purifying and refining the inner world of human beings, in order to allow them to reach a stage of spiritual maturity, continues until the end of time by the heirs of the prophets, the Perfect Guides. For the believers are in need not just of outer cleansing, but of inner cleansing and this is only possible as a result of such spiritual education and training.

Thus, the main origins of the practices and principles of tasawwuf are the Holy Qur'an and the hadith, and must be continued at all times and in all places. That is, tasawwuf is the living form of the establishment of the spiritual and immaterial authority of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

His spiritual authority lives on until this day, via his qualified Companions, Followers (*tabi'een*) and later generations.

The appearance of tasawwuf as, in its current definition, an organised and systematic science and a path to be travelled, corresponds to the events of his second year after the migration.

In the Age of Bliss the schools of theology, creed or law had not yet been established and had not been organised into various sciences. However, at that time, there were various rulings regarding beliefs and laws etcetera's in existence and these were being applied and taught by the prophet's Companions (May Allah be pleased with them). Later the 'rulings' (*ijtihad*) of the great scholars, who were considered authorities in the science of *fiqh*, were adopted by their students and systematised giving rise to various different methods that were later called '*madhhabs'*. They were named according to the name of those great scholars.

Just as with the other Islamic sciences, such practices of '*zuhd'* (abstention) and '*taqwa'* (God-consciousness), inspired by the profound nature of tasawwuf, were practiced in the Age of Bliss, in order to allow people to reach a stage of '*ihsan'* and a relationship with Allah. All of the principles that form the foundation of a sound understanding of tasawwuf are present in the Qur'an and were in practice during the life of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).As time passed, pious scholars and gnostics continued on the prosperous example from that Age of Bliss and began to advice and counsel the people for the sake of earning the pleasure of Allah, to prevent people from yielding to the life of this world and sinking in to heedlessness. These individuals had no desire to blaze a trail or bring about a lifestyle. Their sole aim was to live Islam in accordance with its essence and carry out their worship in a state of *ihsan* and *khushu*, as dictated by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

However, those who benefited from their words, their advice and their state, accepted them as their spiritual guide and teacher. These people then took their advice that is their method of training and purification, which allowed the believers to reach a state of spiritual maturity and to systematise it into a spiritual discipline. As a result, certain '*tariqas'* appeared which took on the name of these teachers. Examples of these are Naqshibandi, Qadiri, Mawlawi and so on.

The name ‘*tariqa’* is given to the method and practice followed by all branches of tasawwuf which take a person to Allah (swt). In time, various *tariqas* following various methods appeared. In this way, every believer has the opportunity to find a *tariq* that is suitable to their own character and nature, in order to be purified spiritually and reach a stage of maturity.

The need for tasawwuf

As we all know, the human being has two aspects, a spirit and a body. Both of these have demands related to their nature. Islam does not deny or reject these inclinations and tendencies, which are part of their nature. It accepts them as fact. In light of the basic principles that it puts forth it tries to encourage those inclinations that are acceptable and to limit those that are unacceptable. That is, Islam presents a balance between the physical and the non-physical. Worship cannot be carried out without the body. Prayer and fasting cannot be performed without the body. Other acts of worship also can only be carried out via a body. However, they likewise cannot be done without the spirit. When we remove the excitement felt by the spirit, passion, or the tenderness and sensitivity of the heart, religion becomes a dry skeleton, whereas Allah (swt) emphasises the notion of ‘*taqwa’* in over 250 places in the Holy Qur’an; *taqwa* is the sensitivity of the heart.

He says in the Holy Qur’an:

‘**Prosperous indeed are the believers. They are in their Prayer humble and fully submissive (being overwhelmed by the awe and majesty of God)’** (Mu’minun, 23:1-2).

Tasawwuf is a method of training taken from the Holy Qur’an and the sunnah. It teaches one how to attain certain states of the heart, which are mentioned in the Qur’an, such as *taqwa*, *khushu*, *tawbah*, *rida,* and in contrast, how the diseases of the heart such as *riya*, ‘*ujub*, and *kibr* are to be removed.

If a human being remains in the realm of corporealism and observes everything from the perspective of materialism, they will see even the most removed events as personalised and within soulless moulds. This is in fact one of the main reasons that lie at the basis of the objections against tasawwuf. However, tasawwuf in fact turns one’s attention towards the spirit, towards metaphysics and otherworldliness without rejecting our physical and outer

needs. It thus shows a way of perfecting and satisfying the human spirit in accordance with a person's capacity.

The Spiritual Masters say:

"To reach one's physical provision is possible by the efforts of the limbs. Similarly reaching one's inner provision is possible by the efforts of the heart".

In accordance with Divine Will, Almighty Allah has created human beings with differing capacities, both physical and spiritual. He does not expect a servitude from His servants that is beyond their capacity; however, He has made them responsible for the degree of potential that He has bestowed upon them. Conversely, in assigning the obligations of religion which is obligatory on all of mankind, Almighty Allah has used the minimum degree of strength as the standard. Undoubtedly this is a manifestation of His endless mercy and compassion upon His servants. Together with this, He has left the door for spiritual ascension and perfection open for those who have, by their nature, the power, the enthusiasm and the potential to do more than the minimum requirement of the religion. That is, in addition to the duties required by the shariah, He has kept the door open by allowing those believers who have the potential to advance in the realm of the heart, to progress towards the peak of togetherness with Allah through various forms of worship, such as supererogatory (*nafilah*) worship, and virtues such as *zuhd*, *taqwa* and *ihsan*.

As is known, this is the path of tasawwuf.

We can illustrate this with the following example:

Shaykh Shibli was once asked: "How much zakat should be paid for five camels?" He replied:

"What is obligatory is one sheep; but according to us, all of them should be for Allah".

He was then asked: "What is your proof for this?" And he replied:

"Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him). He gave his entire wealth for the cause of Allah. Whoever gives their entire wealth for the sake of Allah, freely and generously, he has the spirit and character of Abu Bakr. Whoever gives a large portion of their wealth and property, he is of the temperament and character of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him)... Knowledge that

does not lead one to abandon the world (with one's heart) is not true knowledge[3]".

As this example illustrates, with the elevated capacities of their hearts, each of the great Companions, with each of their particular characteristics, are considered to be imams and leaders in tasawwuf.

For the heart to reach a state of peace and tranquillity is dependent on the degree that one reaches spiritually. This is why it is necessary for the servant to pass through a process of spiritual training. For the heart to be filled with knowledge and wisdom, to become aware of the elevated truths of the religion, and for the servant to be perfected spiritually, is only possible after a series of various operations and procedures.

Likewise, even the prophets who were sent as examples for all of mankind passed through such a period of preparation before they received revelation.

Before the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was appointed with the duty of prophethood, he would retreat to the cave of Hira in the Mountain of Nur (meaning light). Before the prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) heard the first divine words, he spent forty days and forty nights, hungry and thirsty in the Mount Sinai. Likewise, before his conversation with Allah the prophet Moses (peace be upon him) fasted without a break for forty days on Mount Sinai, entering a type of abstention. The prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) was imprisoned for twelve years before he was made Viceroy of Egypt. There he was made to pass through various stages of pain, abstention, struggle and difficulty. In this way his blessed heart was cleansed of all refuges, havens, points of support and matters of concern other than Allah.

In tasawwuf, the idea of *tawbah* from *masiwa,* indicates a stage of preparation in which one shuns, in ones' heart and spirit all things that distance one from Allah, and melt in nothingness and annihilation. This is because spiritual transformation begins when one reaches the point of nothingness and annihilation[4].

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3. Ahmad Zarruq, Qawaid al-Tasawwuf, Qaida:33
4. Nothingness (*mahfiyah*) here meaning feeling one's nothingness compared to Allah and annihilation (*fana*) means giving oneself entirely to Allah, so that no sense of self remains, independent of Allah.

In addition, before the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) set out for his Ascension (*Mi'raj*) he was subject to the mystery of the chapter Inshirah from the Qur'an. As had happened to him twice before, his blessed chest was opened up and his noble heart cleansed and filled with the light of knowledge and wisdom. This was because he would encounter such strange and wonderful events and such Divine mysteries and subtle scenes, on the Night of the Ascension that would have been impossible for him to perceive with the denseness of human nature.

Whereas the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had the purest heart of any human being who had ever lived or would ever live. Even the staunchest of pagans admitted this. In that case, if Allah made His most elect of servants, the prophets, pass through such a purification of the heart, then we can understand how much other people's hearts are in need of such purification. It is impossible for one with a dense and hardened heart to approach Allah Almighty who is *al-Latif* (The Subtle One).

Another piece of evidence regarding this matter is as follows:

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

'Abandon wrong action, outward and inward' (An'am, 6:120).

Thus, just as the human being is required to stay away from outward sins he is also required to stay away from inward sins. In fact inward sins such as *kibr*, *riya*, *hasad*, spite, anger and miserliness are even more dangerous. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)is reported to have said:

"""Whoever has an atoms worth of *kibr* (pride) in his heart will not enter Paradise" (Muslim, Iman, 147).

To remove ugly traits such as *kibr and hasad* (envy and miserliness), which are diseases of the heart, is at least as important as staying away from outward sins.

In essence, outward sins are the products and results of inward sins. Moreover inward sins are more common. People generally make light of these types of sins and do not show the necessary attention and sensitivity to be freed of and protected from them.

The aim of tasawwuf, then, is to cleanse one's outer and inner worlds with methods taken from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, our scholars of ijtihad and our perfect guides, and to reform the state of one's heart and prepare the foundation for it to live with love and certainty of faith.

Thus we can state the following: tasawwuf is an inseparable part of the whole of the Islamic sciences. In particular, fiqh and tasawwuf, which secure compliance with Allah's commands and prohibitions –both outward and inward- are like the two halves of an apple, and like two brother sciences that complete each other.

In principle, tasawwuf, *fiqh* and *aqidah* (creed) are basically different aspects of the same Islam. Abu Hanifa defines *fiqh* as follows:

"*Fiqh* is to know what from a religious perspective is to one's advantage and what is to one's disadvantage".

'*Marifatullah'*, or having a correct concept of one's Lord and knowing Him through one's heart is the most vital aspect of this knowledge and of the utmost importance for a person's eternal happiness or destruction. This is why the text in which Imam Abu Hanifa's views on matters of creed can be found and which has reached us today has been called '*Fiqh al-akbar'*, that is the 'Greatest Fiqh'.

Even though this is how it was in the beginning, later with the development and growth of these kinds of sciences, the *fuqaha*, that is the scholars of *fiqh*, left rulings about *aqidah*, morals, and tasawwuf, outside of *fiqh* and limited it only to rulings about acts and lawful rulings. This is what we understand *fiqh* to mean today.

Tasawwuf is to know what is to a person's advantage and to their disadvantage from both the inward and the outward aspects and to inculcate one to live one's life accordingly. Just as *fiqh* informs us about the outward conditions for the soundness of act such as *wudu* (ablution), cleanliness, ritual prayer (*salat*) and fasting, tasawwuf inculcates the state of the heart which must be reached in order to be able to perform these in the most perfect way.

In this respect, tasawwuf has been called '*fiqh al-batin'*, which has the meaning of being the spiritual basis for the science of *fiqh*.

Learning the outward sciences does not free one from the responsibility of learning the inward sciences. Having learned the outward sciences, many of the scholars of the past and later, have come to believe in the necessity of learning the inward sciences through training and service and have become travellers upon this path. For instance, Hanafi scholars such as Ibn Humam, Ibn Shalabi, Shurunbulali, Khayr al-Din al-Ramli, Hamawi and others... also the Shafii scholars such as Sultan al-Ulama Izz ibn Abdussalam, Imam Ghazzali, Taj al-Din Subki, Imam Suyuti, Shaykh al-Islam Qadi Zakariyya, Allama Shihab ibn Hajar al-Haytami and others...also the Maliki scholars such as Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili, Shaykh Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi, Shaykh ibn Ataullah al-Iskandari, Arif ibn Abi Jamra, Nasiruddin al-Laqani, Ahmad Zarruq and others... also from the Hanbali scholars such as Shaykh Abdulqadir al-Jilani, Shaykh al-Islam Abdullah al-Ansari al-Harawi, Ibn al-Najjar al-Futuhi and others...

(There are also many famous scholars such as Sayyid Sharif Jurjani, Molla Jami, Abdulhakim Siyalquti, Abdul Ghani Nablusi, Ibn Abidin, Shihabuddin Alusi and Zahid al-Kawthari, who entered upon the path of the Naqshibandis).

Like these, many great scholars have become learned in the inward sciences from Sufi masters after having learned the outward sciences. They have benefitted from learning such sciences and adorned themselves with beautiful virtues such as sound belief, sincerity (*ikhlas*), abandoning sin via conversation, service and *sayr u suluq*”[5].

In the same way many learned scholars from the Naqshiband tariq have reached the peak of the outward sciences and received their licence (*ijazah*). These include Yusuf Hamdani, Shah Naqshiband, Alauddin Attar, Yaqub Charhi, Dervish Muhammad, Imam Rabbani and Khalid al-Baghdadi.

Imam Malik has said**:**

“Whoever occupies himself with *fiqh* (the religious legal sciences) and does not pass through a process of training in tasawwuf will become a sinner (*fasiq*). Whoever occupies himself with tasawwuf and does not learn the

5. See Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Hani, *Adab*, Istanbul 2009, p 8-9.

religious sciences will become a heretic (*zindiq*). Furthermore, whoever combines the two will have attained the truth”[6].

Since the integrity of the heart determines the spiritual quality of a human being’s deeds, which are his capital for the hereafter, the patent need for tasawwuf, which aims to gain for the heart an acceptable and perfect integrity, becomes apparent. In this respect then, the view of certain circles which try to see and present our elevated religion as being a mere compilation of dry rules and their subsequent rejection of tasawwuf becomes clearly unacceptable.

It is very wrong to judge and reject the reality of tasawwuf on the basis of the acts and approaches of certain ignorant or unworthy and incompetent people who think that they are practising it or those with ulterior motives.

Just as mistakes, errors and abuse can be found in all areas, so too they are present within those who practice the religious sciences. These can be easily distinguished by competent people. Just as there are various baseless *madhhabs* that have strayed from the truth, so too there are false and baseless *tariqs* that have strayed from the reality of tasawwuf. We must not confuse the true masters of tasawwuf with members of such false paths.

Another aspect of the need and importance for tasawwuf in our day is the method and style it follows in order to reform people. Today many people are in a spiritual crisis as a result of distancing themselves from religion and having committed many grave sins. For such people it is obviously easier to try to reform them and present them with an opportunity for salvation, showing them forgiveness, tolerance, mercy and compassion, rather than becoming angry with them.

To present Islam as a form of divine consolation, atonement, and treatment to those spirits which are suffocating under the tyranny of their minds and their *nafs*, to be able to throw them a life boat, to refrain from transferring the hate felt for the sin to the sinner but rather to view the sinner as a bird with a broken wing, and to approach them with kindness and compassion, is a much more helpful way of guidance.

On the other hand, throughout history tasawwuf has been a means to preventing or forestalling lethargy, laxity, and excess, and has ensured the

6. Ali al-Qari, *Mirkat al-Mafatih,* Beirut, 1422, I, 335.

continuity of spiritual vigour and vitality in times of both economic and social ease; and for those hearts that have become constricted in the confusion and suffocation of the periods of enemy invasion and oppression, it has opened up lofty windows allowing them to breathe; it has been a salve for wounded hearts, a consolation for exhausted minds, and a fountain for thirsty spirits.

Hence, this is a completely prophetic approach. Whenever the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) encountered any bounty or met with any success he said: "O Allah! The real life is that of the hereafter", thereby preventing the heart from inclining towards this world or becoming overcome with pride and egoism. Furthermore, whenever he met with any suffering, pain or struggle he would again say: "O Allah! The real life is only that of the hereafter". He thus warned the believers of falling into despair due to fleeting distress or complaining and becoming drowned in excessive sorrow and harming their state of contentment (*rida*). He gave his community a spiritual prescription for remaining content, at peace and in balance for all circumstances and situations.

In reality, as long as the human spirit remains distant from spirituality, it will not be able to free itself from being dragged into a state of depression, both in times of affluence or poverty. In the first of these situations a person is required to control himself while in the other he is in need of consolation. This is why the human being is in need of the teachings of tasawwuf, which are established on the prophetic method of education, both in times of ease and in times of distress.

However we need to state, before all else, that tasawwuf is not a theoretical science but rather an applied one.

That is, it is a science that cannot be perceived fully by merely reading words, but rather by experience. Muhammad Parsa has expressed this truth as follows:

"The words of these Khwajagan people are not words that are passed down by rote, but are rather experienced states and tasted spiritual pleasures. This is why the people of discernment say about these words that they are *fiqhu al-akbar* (The greatest science of knowing Allah) and *burhani-i azhar* (the most obvious proof). The *yaqin* (certainty) that arises from contemplat-

ing on the words of these blessed people is better than the certainty that arises from witnessing miracles”[7].

That is, it is impossible to explain with the limitations of language, what tasawwuf, which can only be perceived by experience, really is. Now taking this into consideration, the friends of Allah, who have looked at the crystal of tasawwuf, which reflects light of various colours from each of its aspects have come up with many definitions of tasawwuf. This is why it would be more correct to state that tasawwuf is the sum of all of these definitions.

Definitions of Tasawwuf

TASAWWUF: To abandon undesirable and objectionable traits and adopt good character.

TASAWWUF: Purification of the *nafs* and cleansing of the heart. A sacred method of education and spiritual training in which one learns to keep under control the tendencies towards evil that are present in human nature and also allow the seeds of ‘*taqwa’* to grow and flourish.

TASAWWUF: The art of reaching the state of ‘*taqwa’*.

TASAWWUF: The skill of living uprightly. Uprightness (*Istiqama*) is to firmly embrace the Book and the Sunnah, to perceive the divine and prophetic instructions in the depths of one’s heart and apply them with a passion to every stage of one’s life. It is when living with the spirituality of the Book and the Sunnah becomes the greatest form of pleasure for the heart.

TASAWWUF: A state of contentment and submission. It is to avoid becoming affected by the ups and downs of life, to maintain one’s equilibrium in the face of changing situations, to abandon complaint and reach a state of maturity, of being ever content with the decree of Allah.

TASAWWUF: It is the skill of being a righteous slave of Allah via love (*muhabbatullah*) and knowledge (*marifatullah*) of Him.

TASAWWUF: The responsibility felt by those believers who have perfected themselves both physically and spiritually, and approach other

7. Muhammad Parsa, *The subhah of Muhammad Bahauddin,* (translated by Necdet Tosun), p. 19, Erkam Publications, İstanbul 1998.

creatures with a selfless heart, trying to compensate for their deficiencies. It is when compassion, mercy, love and service for creatures on behalf of the Creator becomes a part of one's nature.

TASAWWUF: It is a sacred journey that takes the servant to Allah, via true love and friendship.

TASAWWUF: It is to perceive in truth that the real life is the life of the hereafter and to free one's heart from becoming attached to the *nafs'* fickle and inconstant desires for the world.

TASAWWUF: To become one with the blessed life of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), both outwardly and inwardly and connect to him with a deep love. Tasawwuf is the 'state' of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), both his outward and inward manifestations. This is why tasawwuf consists of the struggle to take one's share from the spirituality of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

In conclusion, what we have tried to define as being tasawwuf, is a life of '*taqwa'*, lived by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), in a state of ecstasy. Anything other than these (definitions), which do not take their essence and their standard from the Qur'an and the Sunnah are baseless and false, however they much they may be attributed to tasawwuf.

The principles of the Path of the *Khwajagan*[8] (The Masters)

The scholars of Islam derive their principles from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. So too the scholars of tasawwuf have also substantiated their views with evidence from the *shari'a*, just like the *mujtahid* imams.

However, in certain *tariqas* where the *shaykhs* have not been selected from people who have internalised and digested the outer rulings of the religion some slips have occurred due to the domination of Sufi drunkenness.

8. ***Khwajagan*** is a Persian title for *"the Master"*. *Khwajagan* is a word often used to refer to a chain of Central Asian Naqshiband Sufi Masters from the 10th to the 16th century (Translator's footnote)

However, where the guides of various *tariqas* have been people of knowledge, that is scholars and gnostics who have also internalised the outwards of religion, they have been protected.

Likewise within the history of tasawwuf, the Naqshiband order has continued in the way of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and since its guides have come from the group of '*Khwajagan'* that is they have been qualified scholars, this *tariq* has been known by this name.

Let us now mention the main tenets of the Khwajagan way and thus illustrate the necessary principles that a sound Sufi tariqa should possess.

1- The first principle in the Khwajagan way is to adopt the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa jama'*. The Khwajagan way has throughout history, taken the Sunni Islam understanding as the basis of its *tariq* and thus preserved its members from certain esoteric (*Batini*) and *Hurufi*[9] *trends.*

2- The second principle of the Khwajagan way is a firm devotion to the Book and the Sunnah. It teaches that spiritual progress cannot be realised without a meticulous application of the Sunnah, however 'minor' it may appear, such as eating, drinking, sleeping and other daily acts. This is why the followers (*murid*) who enter upon the Khwajagan way struggle to follow the slightest indication of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), with great love and enthusiasm.

Bayazid Bistami has the following to say about this matter:

"Even if you see a person who has been given extraordinary powers (*karamat*) and is able to sit cross-legged, floating in the air, do not be taken in immediately. First of all check to see that he abides by the divine commandments and prohibitions, that he maintains the divine limits, that he properly carries out the rulings of the sharia'. If this is not the case, then this is not *karamat* but rather *istidraj*[10]".[11]

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9. Hurufism was was a mystical kabbalistic Sufi doctrine, which spread in areas of western Persia, Anatolia, and Azerbaijan in later 14th - early 15th century. The word '*huruf'* literally means 'letters' (Translator's note).
10. In contrast to *karamah*, *istidraj* are the extraordinary acts performed by unbelievers, sinners and *mutashayyikh* (certain individuals who pretend to be saints even though they are not). These states are a divine test and will drag them to their destruction.
11. Bayhaqi, *Shuab*, III, 304, Qushayri, *Risale*, p 58.

Shah Naqshiband has summarised[12] his *tariq* as following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and the words of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them):

"Whatever we have attained (spiritually) by the grace of Allah, we have attained by acting upon the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In order to see the results of one's deeds one must abide by the rulings of *taqwa* and the *sharia'*, to embrace *azimah* (firm and strict following of the rulings), to act upon the principles of the a*hl al sunnah wa jama*', and to shun all innovations (*bida'*)"[13].

"Those in possession of wisdom and discernment who encounter certain spiritual unexpected acts or events will evaluate those acts on the basis of the *sharia'*. If these acts are in accordance with the standards of the sharia' they will believe in them. If they oppose the sharia they will not give them any regard at all"

One of the great scholars has said:

"I will not accept any word that comes from my heart without having it be inspected by the Qur'an and the Sunnah[14]

3- Another of the principles of the Khwajagan way is to act upon the '*azimah'* rather than the '*ruhsa'*.

Abdulkhaliq Ghujdawani has said:

"Take the way of *azimah* and stay away from the *ruhsah* (taking licence), follow the way of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), apply his *Sunnah* and shun innovation (*bida'*)".

During his journey of purification (*sayr-i suluq*) Shah Naqshiband always applied these commands and advice and said:

"To be Muslim means to devote oneself to the rulings of the *sharia'*, to comply with the standards of *taqwa*, to act with meticulousness and to avoid taking licence, to the best of one's ability; it is in its entirety, light, ease and

12. Muhammad Bakir, *Makamat-i Hazreti Hace Naqshiband*, Bukhara, 1328/1910, p 58
13. Yaqub Charhi, *Risale-i Unsiyye* (thk. Muhammad Nezir Rancha), Islamabad 1983, p. 14.
14. Muhammad Parsa, ibid p 62-63

mercy. All of these are means to reach the degrees of the saints and other great stations.

The *awliyaullah* (friends of Allah) reach the state of sainthood through the training provided by these attributes”[15]

4- The Masters of the Khwajagan way always acted very sensitively in the matter of lawful provision. Shah Naqshibandi shunned with intensity unlawful provision and also avoided eating anything doubtful and would not allow his students to eat from what was doubtful also[16].

He also viewed the food of state rulers as being doubtful and so he never ate at the table of King Hussain[17].

Baqi Billah insistently emphasised the crucial importance of eating lawful provision in order to advance in the path of tasawwuf saying:

“One should be content with little food and give much importance to the wood, water and pots that it is cooked with being lawfully gained. Also the one who cooks the meal should not be heedless and cook the food with the awareness of being in the presence of the Divine. Food that is prepared without paying careful attention to these matters will emit such a smoke that will block the channels of prosperity”[18].

In addition to a food being lawful or unlawful (*halal* or *haram*) even the mood of the person who cooked it can have an effect on the state, actions and the quality of worship of those who eat it. This thus presents the importance of the approach one takes towards one’s food.

5- In the Khwajagan way, much importance is also given to the supererogatory worship and righteous deeds in addition to the obligatory acts. Each kind of righteous deed is seen as crucial investment for one’s eternal life and to be able to carry them out is considered to be a great opportunity.

Junayd Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

15. Muhammad Parsa, ibid p 24-25
16. Muhammad Qadi Samarkandi, *Silsile al-Arifin wa Tazkira al-Siddiqin*, Suleymaniye Ktp, Hajji Mahmud, nr. 2830, vr, 175b
17. See Salahaddin ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anisu al-Talibin wa Uddet al-Salikin*, p 66 p. 66, Iz Publications, Istanbul 2003.
18. Rushdi, Malfuzat, p 34, (in *Kulliyat-i Baqi Billah, pub by Abu’l Hasan Zayd Faruqi and Burhan Ahmad Faruqi,* Lahore 1967).

"We did not arrive at tasawwuf through gossip, altercation or quarrelling. We arrived through hunger, sleeplessness and embracing our righteous deeds in sincerity and devotion".

6- The Khwajagan way aims to earn for its travellers the character of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him); it commands to treat people with the best of character.

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said in a hadith:

"*On the Day of Resurrection there will be nothing that will weigh more heavily on the Scales of the believer than good character. Allah Most High abhors the one who displays ugly behaviour or speaks an ugly word*" (Tirmidhi, Birr, 62/2002).

"The angel Gabriel told me that Allah said:

"This religion (that is Islam) is a religion that I have chosen for Myself and that I am content with. Only generosity and good character befit it. As long as you live as Muslims elevate this religion with these two traits" (Haysami, VIII, 20; Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* VI, 392).

7- The reality of the Khwajagan way is to consider oneself in the presence of Allah, by remembering Him in one's heart and via contemplation. The traveller must never be in a state of heedlessness of Allah and consider that he is ever in His presence and that Allah is with him always.

8- The Khwajagan way places great importance on beneficial knowledge. The traveller should learn and benefit from the religious sciences, live in accordance with it, and help others to do so also.

Abdulkhaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) has said that it is only possible to reach the state of annihilation of the *nafs* by taking the Qur'an in one's right hand and the hadith in one's left and journeying in the light provided by these two[19]. When advising one of his students he said:

19. Abdurrahman Jami, *Nefahatu al-Uns min Hadarati al-Quds* (rev. Mahmud Abidi), Tahran 1375 *hijri* solar/1996, p. 384.

"Learn the sciences of *fiqh* and hadith and stay away from the ignorant amongst the Sufis"[20].

Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was a friend of Allah who was particularly learned in the hadith sciences and who gave great importance to knowledge and scholars. Due to this special trait of his, many of the teachers and students from the Bukhara masjid came to follow him and participate in his assemblies. When this began some of the outward scholars were anxious that the madrasahs would be emptied. In response Bahauddin Naqshiband said to those scholars:

"Let us explain our *tariq* to you and if you see any matter in opposition to the Qur'an or the Sunnah tell us and we will abandon them". The scholars could find nothing and they said:

"Your *tariq* is upright (that is, it is the way of the Qur'an and Sunnah) and we have no objections". Some of them said:

"The cap that you wear is a means to fame".

Bahauddin replied:

"Since my cap is a means for altercation, it would be more proper not to wear it". He then took it off and gave it to a poor person[21]. After this event the esteem held by the scholars for Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) increased even more.

9- In the Khwajagan way there is no withdrawal to a life of constant seclusion and distancing oneself from the people. There is the danger of fame in such seclusion. Whilst amongst the people, the Sufi should seek any opportunity to serve the religion of Allah and His servants. Islam wills the Muslims to come together to form a community. A perfect believer learns to be together with Allah whilst being among the people.

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said:

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20. Abdulkhaliq Gujcduwani, *Vasaya,* Bayazit Devlet Ktp., Valiyyuddin Efendi, no. 3229, paper. 11a.
21. Salahaddan ibn Mubarek al-Bukhari, ibid, p. 278-279; Abu al-Qasım, *al-Risalet al-Bahaiyya*, paper. 74b-75b; Muhammad Bakır, ibid, p. 79-81.

"*The Muslim who mixes amongst the people and endures their pain (cares about their problems and attends to their needs) is better than the one who does not mix amongst them and does not endure their pain*" (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 55/2507).

The following words of **Ali (**may Allah be pleased with him**)** are filled with wisdom:

"There are two bounties of that I do not know which one pleases me more:

The first one is when a person comes to me with the hope of having his need met and asks me in all sincerity to help him.

The second is when Allah Most High uses me as a means to bring about or facilitate that person's wish".

"I would prefer to relieve the distress of a Muslim than to possess a world full of gold and silver." (Ali al-Muttaqi, VI, 598/17049).

Every Muslim is responsible for the state of affairs of the world, in accordance with their potential and the opportunities given to them. They are obliged to concern themselves with the concerns of the Muslims and make efforts to make Islam reign supreme. Those who live an individual and selfish life and remain indifferent to the problems of their Muslim brothers and sisters will be subject to the prophetic caution below:

"*Those who do not concern themselves with the concerns of the Muslims are not from them (that is they are not from the Muslims).*" (Tabarani, *Saghir*, II, 131/1907/Bayhaqi, Shuab, VII, 361).

To remain indifferent to the pain of a brother or sister is a serious crime. Sariyy-i Saqati (may Allah have mercy on him) describes this lack of empathy and, having fallen into such heedlessness even for an instant and the person's subsequent regret through this story:

"One day the market of Baghdad had burned down. One of my students came running up to me and said: "O Master! The entire market of Baghdad has burned down and only your shop was saved. Congratulations". Not considering the shops of my other Muslim brothers I said "Alhamdulillah" on

behalf of my own *nafs*. However for thirty years now I have been seeking forgiveness for that instant of heedlessness"[22].

10- The dress of those who enter upon the Khwajagan way must not be different to that of the other believers. There are no turbans or crowns or other distinguishing garments in this path. They do not give importance to looking or to form themselves different from others and they do not dress themselves differently. They prefer to live a life of modesty. Every disciple wears what is required of their profession and their form and dress is not different from their peers. To be a dervish is not via one's form but via one's heart.

Yunus Emre describes this truth well as:

What they call being a dervish is not through one's robe or turban
If being a dervish was due to one's turban or robe
We too would buy them for 30 or 40 (coins)

Mawlana Khalid-i Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) has said**:**

"The essence of *tariqah* is to embrace the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa al-jama'*, that is the saved group (*firqa'yi najat*). It is to perform one's deeds with meticulousness and avoid resorting to the licence, to turn to Allah always and consider oneself ever under His watch. It is to turn one's face from the adornments and pleasures of this world, in fact from everything other than Allah (*masiwa*) and to reach an awareness of the state of *ihsan*, described in the *hadith*, that is, of being ever together with Allah (to minimize one's carnal desires and perfect one's spiritual potential to the best of one's ability). This path consists of occupying oneself with *dhikr* and *tafakkur* as one does when one is alone, even if one is mixing amongst the people. In addition, it is learning the religious sciences and benefitting from them and benefitting others also by sincerely applying what one has learnt. It is to hide one's spiritual state from the other believers by dressing as they dress, in order to avoid ostentation (*riya*) and arrogance ('*ujb*)[23].

Thus, the Khwajagan way's purpose is that, by complying with these and other similar principles, Islam is lived with great love, passion and enthusiasm of faith. The basic mortar of tasawwuf and its most important capital is love

22. Hatib al-Baghdadi, Tarih, IX, 188; Thahabi, Siyer, XII, 185-186.
23. As'ad Sahib, *Maktubat-ı Mevlana Khalid,* Istanbul 1993, p. 121-122, (4th letter).

and the best manifestation of this is having good manners and adab. Without love or adab, it is not possible to advance spiritually. Otherwise what will be left over after worship? Behaviour towards others and character will be a dry cause and wasted fatigue. One will not receive any pleasure from one's faith, worship or service towards others. Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) has the following to say about this matter:

"My reason asked my heart:

"What is religion?"

My heart then whispered into the ear of my reason:

"Religion is manners (*adab*)"

Being educated by Tasawwuf: The journey of the spirit *(Sayr-u suluq)*

The Arabs of the *jahiliyyah* (ignorant) period were a community of people who had such hardened hearts and who had lost their humanity, so much so that they were able to bury their female baby daughters alive. They were a people devoid of compassion and mercy who believed that right belonged to the strong and that the weak should be deprived of all their rights. Through the spiritual training of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) this community became the most select and elite community in the world and founded a civilisation never before witnessed in history. By keeping fresh within their hearts the love they felt for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), they were able to attain a spiritual vigour and vitality, and as a result their worship was filled with awe and reverence for Allah (*khushu*).

Words as precious as diamonds fell from the lips of those Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who followed in the enlightened way of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). These words were a means of refreshment for those who heard them, like the harmonious flow of a river. These believers, with the good character they obtained from the character of Islam, were like newly blossoming flowers which attracted the hearts and tickled the spirits with their beauty, purity and pleasant fragrance.

This great revolution that the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) brought about in the spirits of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and in the social conscience of mankind requires that we carefully analyse his method of guidance.

The method used by the people of tasawwuf was to take this prophetic method and apply it to their own time and background as required. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) trained his Companions by conversing with them (*suhbah*), transferring the knowledge and wisdom of his heart at every opportunity. With his personal example he allowed the poor *ahl al-suffa* (the people of the bench) in particular, to reach an unimaginable state of perfection through *zuhd* and *taqwa.*

The distinguishing features of the Companions were eating little, sleeping little, speaking little, spending their time reciting the Qur'an, remembering Allah, supererogatory worship, and contemplation. A lifestyle of excessive spending, luxury and waste was unknown by the community of Companions. They were content with what was enough and gave away anything in excess of their need. They worked in order not to be dependent on others and rushed to serve those who were stricken and afflicted which gave the believing hearts much pleasure and joy.

As a result of the spiritual training that the Companions obtained they did not waver for a second even after the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) migrated to the next world. They spread throughout the world as soldiers of knowledge, wisdom, propagation and struggle in the way of Allah. They took the flames of their heart that were ignited in Madina to Samarkand, China, Iran, Anatolia, Istanbul, Africa and the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, with the prosperity they received from the prophet. Their only concern was to seek the pleasure of Allah and be close to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in the next world, the real world.

Abdurrahman ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with him)narrates:

"Islam brought certain difficult commands which were unpleasant to the *nafs*. We found the best of the best to be in these difficult commands that were unpleasant to the *nafs*. For instance we left Mecca and migrated to Madina with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). It was because of this migration that was difficult upon the *nafs* that we were

granted superiority and victory and the road to success was opened for us. Allah Most High says in the Qur'an:

'Just so, your Lord caused you to go forth from your home for a true cause (which He had already determined would be realized); and yet a group from among the believers were averse (to the direction that events took).

'They argued with you concerning the truth (of the matter which God had already decided would be realized) even after it (the direction that developments would take) had been manifest, as if they were being driven toward death with their eyes wide open' (Anfal 8:5-6).

As is described in this verse we set out for Badr accompanied by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Here once more Allah, Most High, gave us superiority and victory.

And so it was that we always encountered the best of outcomes, on account of these commands that our *nafs* found difficult" (Haysami, VII, 26-27).

As so these Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) went against the desires of their *nafs* and did what it did not want them to do and were personally trained by the teachings of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) through *riyazat* (abstention) and *mujahadah* (struggle).

The last expedition of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) to Tabuk was also filled with difficulty and hardship. The Muslim army had travelled for thousands of kilometres and then returned. When they arrived back in Madina they had practically changed form, their skin was taut over their bones, and their hair and beards were dishevelled. It was while they were in this state that the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said to them:

"You have come back in the best way. Now you have come back from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad".

The Companions asked:

"What is the greater jihad?"

The prophet replied:

"The jihad (struggle) against one's desires" (Bayhaqi, al-Zuhdu al-Kabir, p 198/374; Suyuti, *Jami,* II, 73/6107).

Another time the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) praised the righteous believers who struggled against their caprices and whims as follows:

"The true mujahid is the one who struggles against their nafs" (Tirmidhi, Fadail al-Jihad, 2/1621; Ahmad, VI, 20).

The following words of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) summarise nicely the station of the heart that the Companions reached under the spiritual training of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and as a result of the struggle against their nafs:

"We reached such a state that we were able to hear the glorifications (tasbihat) of the food that we ate" (Bukhari, Manakib, 25).

Thus, tasawwuf in the hands of Sufi teachers (*murabbi*), who are the real heirs of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and through the prophetic methods of training becomes like a spiritual school in which the *nafs* is refined and the heart is purified. Enrolment in this spiritual school and the steps taken in the process of becoming a perfect human being is called '*sayr-i suluq'*.

As a result of this *sayr-i suluq* everything that distances a person from Allah is renounced from the heart. This is such an arduous and demanding task that it is like panning tonnes of dirt in order to obtain one gram of gold.

The aim of tasawwuf, having gone through this process of spiritual refinement, is to allow the human being to live in a constant state of being together with Allah. It is to find Allah in one's heart, to be united with Him in one's heart and to reach the peak of happiness. In the eyes of those who reach this peak anything other than Allah (*masiwa*) falls short to its true worth. In the face of the spiritual joy that comes from being together with Allah, all other fleeting pleasures lose their value.

Ibrahim ibn Adham (may Allah have mercy on him), who rejected his worldly kingdom for the sake of the ocean of divine love that he later found, said:

"If the passion and rapture found in the love we felt for Allah was something material, kings would have sacrificed their entire wealth and kingdom in order to take it from us".

It is without a doubt then that the way to reach this peak of happiness is through perfecting the spirit; that is through *sayr-i suluq*.

Methods of training the spirit

There are many methods of training that are applied in *sayr-u suluq*, both general and specific. We will focus on some of the general methods:

a. Suhbah (Spiritual conversation and togetherness)

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

'But remind and warn, for reminding and warning are of benefit to the believers' (adh-Dhariyat 51:55).

The most fruitful setting for this reminding and warning is the *suhbah* of tasawwuf. The words '*sahabi'* and '*suhbah'* come from the same root, which shows the importance of this matter since one of the most important means for making the *Sahaba* (the Companions) was the benefit they received from the prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) *suhbah* (or conversations with them).

Thus we can state that *suhbah* is a '*sunnah al-muakkadah'*[24].

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) did not place a book in the hands of every Companion. Rather he gave great importance to *suhbah* and their hearts being together. The Companions were thus witness to the spiritual states of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) as they poured out directly from his heart. As a result of this spiritual reflection they received their hearts were filled with the spiritually of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In addition to the words and knowledge of this interaction carried out in reverence and awe is also

24. ***Sunnah al Muakkadah*:** These are the acts done continually by the prophet Muhammad, but which he would occasionally abandon only in order to demonstrate that there was no binding definite command to carry them out; acts that are not obligatory (*fard*) and necessary (*wajib*).

a transfer of energy from one heart to the other; that is a flow of prosperity and spirituality becomes active. As we just mentioned this is one of the most important mysteries of what made the Companions what they were. It is due to the result of this feature of *suhbah* that righteous individuals who came after the Companions would never be able to reach their degree, even if they worshipped more than the Companions.

Suhbah has a special importance in almost all of the *tariqat* and in particular in the Naqshiband *tariqa*, due to this transfer of spiritual energy and blessings from heart to heart.

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Our way of spiritual training is founded upon the suhbah".

Assemblies of *suhbah* and *dhikr* are like gardens of paradise in this world, in which divine mercy and tranquillity (*sakinah*) rains down.

Abu Hurairah and Abu Said al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with them) reported that they heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say:

"Whenever a gathering meets to remember Allah, the angels encompass them, divine mercy envelops them, a tranquillity descends upon them and Allah Most High mentions them amongst His superior servants (the prophets and the angels)" (Muslim, Dhikr, 39).

Allah Most High says about the '*sakinah'* mentioned here:

'He it is Who sent down His (gift of) inner peace and reassurance into the hearts of the believers, so that they might add faith to their faith' (al-Fath, 48:4).

When Allah sends down His *sakinah* upon them, the believers in the *suhbah* increase in perseverance in their religion, faith, guidance and foresight. Their seriousness increases and they gain a spiritual grandeur. In this way their devotion and obedience towards the commands of Islam is strengthened and their reverence and love for Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) increase. The result is a spiritual peace, tranquillity and certainty (*yaqin*).

In that case truthful and righteous believers should consider such assemblies as treasures.

Another of the most fruitful benefits of these assemblies of *subhah* is that the positive energy and spiritual state of those present spreads to one another.

In spiritual assemblies of *suhbah* the hearts benefit from each other just like in the Law of Communicating Vessels[25]. Transfer of states and transactions of influence take place.

In time the hearts begin to resemble one another. The pleasures felt, things despised, feelings and opinions become the same.

However one condition for this benefit is that one participates in these assemblies of *suhbah* with the ecstasy of intention of worship; one listens with love, respect and courtesy; and one keeps one's heart receptive and awake. This is because true *suhbah* takes shape according to the state of those who are listening. Unexpected events occur in accordance with the state of the hearts of those listening. It is from a true *suhbah* that each person can take his own spiritual prescription, having realised his own defects and faults and try to reform them. In this way his enthusiasm and efforts in his journey to closeness to Allah increases.

A suhbah that does not bring about these results turns into a fruitless gathering within four walls.

b. Dhikr/Awrad

According to some linguists, the word ***'insan'*** (human being) comes from the word '***nisyan'***. *Nisyan* is the opposite of *dhikr* (which means remembrance) and indicates forgetfulness which is one of the greatest weaknesses of the human being. Our Lord warns us of submitting to such a weakness as follows:

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25. **Law of Communicating Vessels:** When either two or more different vessels are connected at the base they are called communicating vessels. Whenever some liquid is placed into any of the vessels, there will be a flow of the liquid between vessels until each has the same amount of liquid. This is because their base is the same the characteristic of one vessel becomes the same as the others.

‘**And do not be like those who are oblivious of God and so God has made them oblivious of their own selves. Those, they are the transgressors’** (al-Hashr 59:19)

The best way to minimise the weakness of forgetfulness is through *dhikr*.

The ability to be a true servant of Allah and thus reach a stage of *marifatullah* (knowledge of Allah) is in accordance with the degree that *dhikr* is established and its depth felt in one’s heart.

Dhikr is the most pleasing of acts to Allah and the best means for those servants who wish to be together with Him. Out of all of the duties of the human being, *dhikr* has a special place as is indicated by the fact that the word ‘*dhikr’* is mentioned in over 250 places in the Qur’an.

In many verses in the Qur’an Allah, Most High, commands His servants to remember Him much. He tells them not to remain heedless of *dhikr* even at the most sensitive and precarious of times, such as on the battlefield[26].

In **Ibn Abbas’s** (may Allah be pleased with him) commentary on the verse: **‘O you who believe, remember and mention God much’** (Ahzab, 33:41), he says:

“Allah Most High has placed a certain limit on those acts of worship which are obligatory. He has accepted the excuses of those who have an excuse. However *dhikr* is an exception. Allah Most High has not placed any limits of *dhikr*. He does not accept the excuse of anyone who abandons it, unless they have lost their mind. Allah Most High has commanded that people be in a state of *dhikr* under all circumstances”[27].

How instructive it is for us that when Allah, Most High, sent His two prophet servants Musa and Harun to warn Pharoah, He said to them:

‘**But speak to him with gentle words, so that he might reflect and be mindful or feel some awe’** (Ta Ha, 20:44).

Thus, He even warned two of His prophets and all of mankind on their behalf of being neglectful of *dhikr*.

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26. See Nisa 4:102-103.
27. Tabari, *Jami al-Beyan an Te’vili Ayi’ al-Qur’an,* Beirut 1995, XXII, 22; Qurtubi, XIV, 197.

This is why in tasawwuf, those followers who wish to reach Allah, are advised to perform various forms of *dhikr* and *awrad* at certain times, thus demonstrating an important path to reaching spiritual perfection.

Dhikr, allows a person to take on the attributes of Allah. A name takes on its meaning. As a person continues to invoke the Beautiful Names of Allah (*asma al-husna*) they progress towards taking on the divine attributes.

Dhikr is the greatest aid to help the servant be together with Allah. The believer who remembers and contemplates upon the name of Allah and His attributes reaches the awareness that Allah is always with him and always sees him. In time his character is enhanced and made beautiful and the love for Allah increases within his heart.

Dhikr is a refuge in times of sorrow and distress. In times of joy, it is a means for an increase in spirituality.

Dhikr is to breathe in the air of Paradise while still residing in this world. In Paradise people will be in a constant state of *dhikr* since there is no heedlessness there.

All of the *awrad* and *adhkar* taught in the schools of tasawwuf are very effective prescriptions for the diseases of the heart.

Dhikr is the most important infusion that the hearts are so in need of and Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur'an:

اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

'**Be aware that it is in the remembrance of and whole-hearted devotion to God that hearts find rest and contentment'** (Ra'd, 13:28).

Muhammad Parsa (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"The purpose of all worship is to remember Allah, MostHigh, that is *dhikr*. Those people who migrate from this world with love (*muhabbah*) and intimate knowledge (*unsiyah*) of Allah dominant in their hearts will have migrated to true happiness. There can be no love or intimate knowledge without increase in *dhikrullah* (that is without perfecting one's *dhikr* and delving deep in contemplation). The origin of Islam, 'La ilaha illallah', that is the

declaration of the oneness of Allah is the essence of *dhikr*. All other worship is done to strengthen this *dhikr* and give it spirituality...

A sign of real and perfect *dhikr* is to not forget Allah in the divine commands and prohibitions and always be prepared and willing to obey His commands at all times and in all places. Otherwise a person's *dhikr* will not be more than the whisperings and temptations of the *nafs*. This is why the essence of beginning *dhikr* is to sincerely repent from one's sins in regard to Allah and to other people; those committed both openly and in secret. There can be no real effect of a person's *dhikr*, if that person's deeds and character are in opposition to Allah"[28].

c. Muhabbah (love of Allah)

When we look at the core of education in tasawwuf we see that its real capital is *muhabbah* and the form of its best manifestation is displaying *adab*[29].

As the love for a being intensifies, everything related to that being earns a share in this love to the degree of its closeness. For instance a *murid* who loves his *murshid* feels love for anyone who possesses similar characteristics -however deficient they may be. If he encounters someone close to his *murshid* he compliments him as if he has met with a pilgrim recently returned from visiting the Ka'bah. To possess any object that his *murshid* uses brings about an unparalleled joy in his spirit. This is similar to the joy felt by Uways al-Qarani when Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) sent him his blessed robe.

Ibrahim Dasuqi (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Allah increases the spiritual rank of the one who cherishes love in his heart for his shaykh. However the following should not be forgotten: If the shaykh was not merely carrying out the function of being a ladder to allow his followers to reach Allah, then Allah's wrath would have descended on

28. Muhammed Parsa, *ibid* p. 45-46.
29. ***Adab***, in the context of behavior, refers to prescribed Islamic etiquette: "refinement, good manners, morals, decorum, decency, humaneness". To exhibit Adab would be to show "proper discrimination of correct order, behavior, and taste" (Translator's note).

those hearts which harbour love for other than Him. Allah is very possessive or *ghayur*[30] *in this matter, and wills that all love be directed to Him only"*[31].

All love for other than Allah (*ghayr*) is metaphorical because the heart belongs to Allah in the absolute sense. Consequently, the real beloved cannot be any other than Allah. All other things that are loved and the states that arise are like the steps that lead to the palace. These are the steps taken for the heart to prepare it for love of Allah. The most prosperous stage in these efforts is to meet with a Perfected Guide and experience the spiritual excitement of familiarity and love with him. The most effective tool for this is *rabita*[32]. To reach an elevated stage in which love for a spiritual guide in one's heart is felt and strengthened and reaches a stage which cannot be compared to the most ordinary and base of connections.

The prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) grandson Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) expressed his spiritual state after asking his step-uncle Hind ibn Abi Hale for a description of his grandfather:

"My uncle Hind ibn Abi Hale would narrate the *hilya*[33] *of the Messenger of Allah very beautifully. It would give me great pleasure to listen to him tell me about the Messenger of Allah so that my heart could remain devoted to him and I could follow in his footsteps"* (*Tirmidhi, Shamail,* p. 10).

These words express *rabita* in its active state. To listen to the description of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is one of the best means for establishing devotion of the heart to him.

The dictionary meaning of *rabita* is connection and bond. In this respect then there is no creature in the universe that is without connection. Everything is connected to everything else.

Consider a mother whose son goes to the army. She thinks about him constantly. Whenever she cooks a meal she says: "O how my son would

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30. *Ghayur*- has the meanings of being very jealous, but also earnest concern, vigilant care. *Ghayr* also means 'other'. So in this sense when Allah is said to be '*ghayur'* it means that He is not content with His creation loving other than Him and is earnestly concerned about this (translator's note)
31. Imam Sharani, *Counsel from Ibrahim Dasuqi,,* (trans.Erdoğan Baş), Istanbul 1996, p. 64.
32. *Rabita* means keeping a spiritual link/attachment with the Master (Translator's note).
33. The *hilya* is a written, eloquent description of the prophet Muhammad's character and appearance.

love this". Or when a young man gets engaged he cannot stop himself thinking about his future wife. Whenever he sees something beautiful he thinks: "If only my fiancée could see this too". If he is brought a delicious meal he thinks: "If only my beloved could eat this too". So if there is such a bond of love in such worldly and fleeting cases then we cannot imagine this bond not to be present in spiritual matters. On the contrary, as one's spiritual state increases the bond of love in one's heart is strengthened. This is why the Blessed Companions would find great pleasure and joy in being able to say to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him): "May my life, my wealth and everything be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah". They felt it to be an obligation to be able to sacrifice everything they had for the cause of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

This bond in tasawwuf is to keep alive the love felt for a Perfected Guide and imitate his righteous deeds and good behaviour.

Keeping alive love and respect for one's guide gains for the disciple a spiritual vitality. Love of righteous individuals is just as effective and beneficial as their discourse. Love and familiarity are like a channelled flow between two hearts. The strength of this flow determines how much the state of the *murshid* spreads to the *murid*.

According to a narration, one time the great Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was leaning against a mulberry tree in the garden of Shahrisabz. Learning of this event years later Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) bought that garden and would go there from time to time to observe that tree[34]. This is a manifestation of the love leading to adoration felt by a follower of the shaykh of his shaykh.

Love is essential if one wishes to advance spiritually. In order to imitate the behaviour of the *murshid* and be able to reflect his spiritual state the *murid* must be bonded to his *murshid*. This occurs through love because a person will only imitate and wish to resemble the one they love.

Through this *rabita* the transfer of spiritual state between *murshid* and *murid* indicates a development in the direction of the *murid* becoming one with his *murshid*. It is said in a hadith:

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34. Muhammed Hashim Kishmi, *Nasamatu al Quds min Hadaiqi al Uns* (ed. Munir-i Jihan Malik), Tahran University, Faculty of Literature. (Unpublished doctoral thesis) 1375/1996, s. 167.

اَلْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ اَحَبَّ

"A person is with the one he loves..." (Bukhari, Adab, 96)

This togetherness is of course more a bond of state, behaviour, of feelings and thoughts and of attitude and direction, rather than a physical togetherness. It is doubtful whether a love that does not bring about such a bond of togetherness is real or true love.

Through this *rabita* the *murid* is able to prosper from the spirituality of his *murshid* and preserve his state of peace by cleansing his heart of worldly thoughts.

On the other hand it is highly likely that people who do not attach their hearts to a spiritual guide will lose their hearts to their carnal desires and follow lowly guides in accordance with the truth that "One's nature does not accept emptiness". This is why Allah, Most High, encourages the believers to keep the company of truthful and righteous people:

يَآ اَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truly sincere' (Tawbah 9:119).

Khwaja Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The command to 'be with' in this verse indicates a constant togetherness. Since this togetherness is mentioned in the absolute sense, it indicates both an active and a nominal togetherness. Active togetherness is to be actively present with one's heart attentive in the assemblies of the righteous. Nominal togetherness consists of envisioning their states while being absent from them[35].

Thus the first step in becoming righteous is to keep the company of the righteous; that is to be with them in a state of familiar love. A natural result of this situation is that one becomes righteous.

35. For details see *Rashahat*, p 453.

The saying ‘a grape becomes darker by looking at other grapes’ is an expression of this truth of maturation as a result of reflecting each other’s attributes.

One time the Companions asked the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him):

“Who are the real friends of Allah?”. He replied:

اَلَّذِينَ اِذَا رُئُوا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ

“The friends of Allah are those who when you look at their faces they remind you of Allah” (Haysami, Majmau al-Zavaid, X, 78; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 4)

Thus being together with the friends of Allah and observing with etiquette their blessed faces is a means for the prosperity, spirituality and expansion of the heart.

The purpose of *rabita* is to strengthen one’s spiritual bond via the chain of friends of Allah which goes back to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and to benefit from this togetherness.

When people stand in line holding an electric cable, the last person in the line will also be affected by the current in accordance with his potential.

If in addition to this spiritual togetherness there is also a physical togetherness then this is ‘*nur un ala nur’* (light upon light).

However in tasawwuf training a mere physical togetherness is not acceptable. In truth there are some who can sit at the foot of a Perfected Guide but not take their share due to their heedlessness. On the other hand there are those sincere *murids* in distant lands, who due to the deep respect, longing, love and bond felt for their *murshid*, are subject to unique openings. Some of our great scholars have said: “The one in Yemen is here with me whilst the one next to me is in Yemen”. Thus the important thing is that one should not lose the togetherness of the heart, wherever one may happen to be.

As is the case in every other matter, displaying *adab* is essential in *rabita*. Khwaja Abdulaziz (may Allah have mercy on him), one of the murids of Khawaja Imkenegi (may Allah have mercy on him), expressed that in *rabita* it is more in accord with the adab of tasawwuf, that rather than the

murid imagining his shaykh coming to him, he should imagine himself going to enter the presence of his shaykh[36].

Rabita is a very important method in Sufi training, and is applied in practically all of the Sufi orders, even though its name and way of application may differ.

However, from the 19th century onwards, *rabita* has been intensely criticised and debated whether it is a matter of belief or unbelief. Whereas, the fact is that, as stated above, *rabita* is a natural psychological outcome. It has no connection with unbelief. Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) has the following to say about this matter:

"... the one whose heart is attached to worldly things such as property and wealth and constantly thinks about them is not considered an unbeliever, so why should attaching one's heart to a believer be a cause for unbelief?"[37]

In short, *rabita* is to keep constantly alive the love a *murid* feels for his *murshid*. In no way does it indicate any sort of deviance such as attributing some sort of divinity to one's *murshid*. Islam rejects all matters that open the door to *shirk* (associating partners with Allah), such as the idea of priesthood in Christianity.

Let it not be forgotten that all human beings, apart from the prophets, are weak and imperfect. Even the prophets have erred due to the fact that they were human beings. However, since they were subject to divine support their actions were divinely corrected. Thus, however necessary it is to show love and respect for our spiritual great people, it is also of the utmost necessity to abide by the limits of the sharia in refraining from elevating them.

d. Serving others

The greatest fruit of faith is mercy and a natural result of this is serving others. To have mercy and feel for other people is a great favour of Allah. It

36. Kishmi, *Nasamat al-Quds*, p. 340.
37. Ali ibn Hussain Safi, *Rashahat Ayn al-Hayat* (ed. Ali Asgar Mu'iniyan), Tehran 2536/1977, II, 636-637.

is only possible to speak of a heart, discernment and a conscience for the one who can feel for other people. It is said in a hadith:

"*Have mercy on those on the earth so that the One in heaven will have mercy on you*" (Abu Dawud, Adab, 58).

Mercy is to offer something that you have to those who do not have it. In other words mercy is to try to compensate for the deprivation of others and run to their aid.

In the Holy Qur'an, our Lord most often makes mention of the attributes 'Rahman' and 'Rahim'. Consequently we cannot conceive of a heart that believes in Allah being lacking in mercy, giving out and serving others. A perfected believer cannot remain indifferent to the voiced or silent cries of any creature, and of a human being in particular, and will not refrain from doing whatever they can to help them.

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Shams taught me something: "If on the face of the earth, even only one believer is cold, then you do not have the right to warm yourself". I know that there are many believers who are cold; and I can now no longer warm myself..."

That is, Shams instilled in Mawlana (may Allah have mercy on them) a sensitive conscience that shuddered when thinking of people who were cold. It is possible to warm the body with clothes. However to warm the conscience is dependent on the heart approaching Allah and by serving others with mercy and compassion.

This example is like a template which can be used in the face of the deprivation of every creature. This is why all instances of disaster and squalidness should cause the conscience, before the body, to shudder. In this way all shudders of the conscience that are upon righteousness are means for the hearts to become warmed up and find peace.

In Sufi training the importance of serving others is great. The most effective way of adorning the heart with feelings such as humility, modesty, and mercy and compassion towards other creatures is to serve others for the sake of Allah. From this respect then all Perfected Guides have perceived serving others as crucial progress in the training of their students and have said:

"The one who serves will also be served".

Serving others is a unique and elevated step that allows the heart to reach the peaks of spirituality. It is such a step that all of those who were subject to divine togetherness and endless reward - the prophets, the saints, the *abrar* and the *asfiya* - were all elevated on this step.

That is, they were embodied examples of the following hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

"The master of a people is the one who serves them"[38].

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) **has said:**

"Our shaykhs would keep those whose future they were hopeful about, occupied with serving others"[39].

"It is necessary to occupy oneself with whatever is the requirement and necessity of the moment. *Dhikr* and contemplation (*muraqaba*) is done when one cannot find a Muslim to help or serve. Serving others which is a means to relieving the distress of a person and winning their heart takes priority over *dhikr* and contemplation (*muraqaba*). Some people think that occupying oneself with supererogatory worship is more important than serving others.

The fruit of serving others is the blossoming of love and peace in the heart. The following saying illustrates this: "The hearts have been created in a way that they naturally love those who are good to them". The result of supererogatory worship can never be equal to that of gaining the love of other believers. I did not learn this by reading the books of the Sufis, I learned it by serving the people"[40].

Just as the body has requirements for physical nourishment so too the spirit has a need for spiritual nourishment. Worship, behaviour towards others and good character are the most vital and necessary forms of nourishment for the spirit. Serving others, which is one of the social responsibilities of the believer, is an act that completes these others. The believer should try his best to avoid neglecting any of these.

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38. Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* I, 334; VI, 334; Daylami, *Musnad,* II, 324; Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* no: 24834.
39. Kishmi, *Nasamat al-Quds*, p. 244.
40. Mir Abdulawwal, *Masmu'at*, Istanbul 1993, p. 16, 89; Safi, *Rashahat,* I, 94, II, 407-408.

A perfected believer should have:

-the attributes of the *ahyar*; they should place importance on worship and supererogatory prayers through *taqwa*,

- the attributes of the *abrar*; they should race to serve others and suffer their *nafs* to be trained and purified.

- the attributes of the *shuttar*; they should try with all their might to perform their duties of worship and serving others with great passion, ecstasy and spiritual rapture.

Ahmad Qasani summarises the importance of serving others with such a heart.

"This world is the place of service. The hereafter is the place of *qurba*, or closeness to Allah. The degree of a person's closeness to Allah is dependent on the degree of his service to others"[41].

Through their service, the friends of Allah train and refine those who love them and also bring them closer to Allah. Thus we can state that "tasawwuf is the path of service".

The author of *Rashahat*, which is a biography of the Naqshiband masters, Ali ibn Hussain Safi, one day rose to take his ablutions. His nephew wanted to fill his urn with water however Safi prevented him from doing so, saying:

"The Khwajagan way is the way of serving others, not being served by others"[42].

In conclusion, a believer who wishes to progress should seek out the ways of serving others for his eternal gain, and seek Allah's pleasure in every act, big or small.

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There are many other methods of training other than *suhbah*, *dhikr*, *muhabbah* and serving others in *sayr u suluq*, the pathway to spiritual purification and perfection. The methods mentioned here are only a few of the general methods. These methods of training and purification can vary

41. Ahmad Qasani, *Adab al-Saliqin, I*stanbul Un. Book, FY, pub. 649, issue. 53b-54a.
42. Kishmi, *Nasamat al Quds*, p. 213.

depending on the conditions of the time and place and the person's character and personality. In the sharia there are rules that are general and applicable to everyone, whereas in tasawwuf, in addition to the rules of sharia, there are also personalised methods, just as there are unique prescriptions for glasses in accordance with the degree of the person's sight.

قد أفلح من تزكى

“He is successful who growth”

(al-A‘lâ, 14)

The Golden Chain

The kingdoms of this fleeting life are destined to come to an end. However, the spiritual kingdoms of the friends of Allah continue in the hearts with the same grandeur, even after they die. A patent proof of this is in the number of visitors who flock to the tombs of Shah Naqshiband, Mawlana, Yunus Emre and Aziz Mahmut Hudayi (may Allah have mercy on them) among others, as is the great attention and interest shown in their works.

We should consider that these individuals did not hand out money or worldly treasure to these people; nor did they bestow on them worldly ranks or positions. However, by transforming their hearts into refuges of mercy and spreading prosperity, spirituality and peace from those hearts to the peoples' spirits, they became sources of healing for their diseased hearts. This is why they continue to live on in the hearts of the people even though their mortal lives have come to an end.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN

The friends of Allah and the Perfected Guides (*murshid-i kamil*).

Out of all of the human beings that have ever lived, the best in character and the peak of refinement, grace and elegance was undoubtedly the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). All virtues and beautiful character were present in his unparalleled model personality. His heart was like a rose garden filled with beautifully scented roses and delicate graceful flowers. The friends of Allah, who are the heirs of the prophet, are like winds of mercy filtered from that rose garden.

The hearts of the friends of Allah, who applied with the greatest of care and meticulousness the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in their own lives, are like polished mirrors, ever reflecting the brilliant light of the prophetic character. For the leader, master, beloved and sultan of the friends of Allah is the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself.

By reaching a state of *fana fil rasul*, that is annihilating oneself in the love of the prophet, and having tasted real peace and happiness, the friends of Allah, like the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself, also do not speak from their own *nafs*, desires or whims. They are like the *ney* having distanced and purified from their inner world everything that keeps them afar from Allah. All of the echoes of guidance that are heard from them are taken from the blessed breath of the prophet whose character they have adopted.

It has been said in a *hadith qudsi*:

"...Almighty Allah becomes the ear with which they hear, the eye with which they see, the hand with which they hold, the foot with which they walk, the heart with which they consider and the tongue with which they speak" (See Bukhari, Riqaq, 38; Haysami, II, 248).

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him), the great Islamic scholar stated in one of his books:

"The *awliyaullah* (friends of Allah) and righteous people... they are the real purpose of this universe being created. It is they who have delved into the truths of knowledge and acted upon it"[43].

Wherever they are, the friends of Allah are a means of mercy, forgiveness, and blessings. They are with open arms ready to embrace with mercy and compassion all classes of society. They are also like magnets, centres of attraction for the people of faith.

Almighty Allah loves these righteous servants of His, who have adopted His own beautiful attributes and made them beloved to those of his servants whom He has favoured. He says in a verse from the Holy Qur'an:

'**Assuredly, those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, the All-Merciful will assign for them love (in the hearts of the inhabitants of the heaven and many on the earth, so that they will receive welcome throughout creation**…)' (Maryam, 19:96).

The following story expresses this truth nicely:

Harun Rashid, the Abbasid caliph, was living in Rakka in his glorious palace. One day Abdullah ibn Mubarak (may Allah have mercy on him) arrived. All of the people of the city went out to meet him. The caliph was left practically all alone in the big city. Watching this scene from his balcony, one of the servants of Harun Rashid called out:

"What is this? What is happening?" They told him:

"A great scholar has arrived from the Khorosan. His name is Abdullah ibn Mubarak. The people have gone out to greet him".

43. İbnü'l-Cevzî, *Sıfatü's-Safve,* Kâhire 1421, I, 17.

The servant then said:

"This is the real kingdom it is not the kingdom of Harun. This is because in the kingdom of Harun, the workers cannot be gathered together unless the police force them".

Thus, true kingdom is the love that Allah places in the hearts of people for fleeting kingdoms are destined to come to an end one day. However, spiritual kingdoms continue to live on in the hearts with the same magnificence, even after death.

Throughout history, people have always gathered around these model personalities. These individuals did not distribute wealth or treasure to the people nor any other worldly thing. However they assured peace for their spirits and nourished their spiritual hunger. This is why they continue to live on in the hearts of the people long after their death.

Almighty Allah has bestowed on those of His friends (*awliya*) that He loves and has made beloved to others, various features according to their states.

For instance He made Shah Naqshiband an unparalleled ocean of benevolence (*himmah*) through his spiritual disposal and *marifatullah* (knowledge of Allah); He made some like Majnun wander throughout the desert; He made some of them remain in a continual station of wonder and admiration; others He made speechless in the face of His awesome manifestations and hid them in the seclusion of silence; some He made nightingales of love like Yunus Emre; others, seas of meaning spurting out wisdom from their lips like Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. There are also some amongst these noble individuals who gathered together all of these attributes within them and so are indescribable (may Allah have mercy on them).

The friends of Allah are, to use the common expression: 'perfect human beings' (*insan-i kamil*). That is, they are the ideal and model personalities desired by Allah. As we just mentioned each *wali* does not bear the same characteristics. Even though they may be 'perfect' themselves, only those of them who are perfect and perfecting, the *'murshid i kamil'*, who are in a state in which they can help others to reach spiritual perfection, are entrusted with and given permission to guide others.

The Perfect Guides bear elevated spirits and lofty personalities and have arrived at a state of true knowledge, as a result of their loving obedience to the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him). They are individuals who have completed their spiritual training and reached a degree of competence in guiding others. Having reached such a state, they have then turned towards the people to invite them to become beautiful servants of Allah, and a worthy community of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), occupying themselves with their spiritual purification.[44] Allah, Most High, has endowed them with *marifatullah* (knowledge of Allah) and the Divine attributes and appointed them as unique guides for humankind.

There are certain principles of this 'divine appointment' which ensures the continuity of the chain of spiritual guides. The following event sheds light on one of the most important of these principles:

Alauddin Attar narrates:

"I was present when Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshiband was nearing his death... Those present were thinking to themselves:

"I wonder who the Master will leave in his place to continue the spiritual guidance of his students". Shah Naqshiband took this opportunity to say the following:

"Do not cause me any confusion at this time. This matter is not in my hands. Whoever Allah, Most High, appoints will be occupied with your training"[45].

Thus, the continuation of the chain of spiritual guidance takes place through the appointing of another guide to be the spiritual heir of the perfected guide. This appointment is not in the power of the previous guide. This appointment can only be made in the spiritual realm, through the indication and permission given by Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him). That is, it is not enough to be competent in the duty of spiritual guidance, but one also needs spiritual appointment.

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44. See Muhammad Parsa, *The talks of Muhammad Bahauddin, p*. 77-78.
45. Ali bin Husayin Safi, *Rashahat-i Aynu al Hayat*, p. 123-124; Muhammed bin Abdullah Hani, Adab pp. 305-306.

Throughout history many of the *tariqat* have not been able to continue because a spiritual guide has not been confirmed through spiritual appointment. In some *tariqat*, based on the same wisdom, more than one worthy guide has been given permission. This is the reason for the different branches in the *tariqat* chain.

On the other hand, being spiritually appointed is a divine favour bestowed on the one who is worthy of it. Even if this duty is bestowed upon one who is not competent in the people's eyes, this situation actually demonstrates that this individual is in fact competent or will be made competent enough to perform this duty. This appointment can be made for someone who is well known or to one who has remained hidden from the people and sometimes it passes from father to son. Throughout history there have been many father and son prophets. The situation is the same for the chain of Perfect Guides.

For instance Imam Rabbani's duty was passed on to his son Muhammad Masum and from him to his son Shaykh Sayfuddin.

Thus physical inheritance is not an obstacle to spiritual inheritance. What is important is competence and spiritual appointment.

Perfect Guides are those individuals who have been raised under the guidance of other Perfect Guides like themselves, who have arrived to Allah, and who are knowledgeable in the rulings of the *sharia* and practice them. They are aware of the hazardous sites of the spiritual journey, the 'bumps' in the road, the pits, sharp corners, and endless abysses, the dangerous passes, and the tricks of the *nafs* and Satan, and are always cautioning their students and advising them in an effort to protect them. They inculcate in them patience, forbearance, contentment and gratitude, thus helping their students reach their goal in safety. Whether present or absent, they try to protect their students from all forms of misguidance. All of their states, actions and words are in meticulous conformance with the commands and prohibitions of the sharia and the *adab* and rules of *tariqa*. They themselves avoid physical comfort, pleasure and amusement. They refrain from taking the easy 'way' and shun innovations (*bid'a*). They patiently bear all tribulations and struggles, striving to carry out their acts with meticulousness. They race to help their brother in religion and turn to *zuhd* and *taqwa*, sufficing with what is enough and living a non-troublesome life of simplicity. In this way they become embodied examples of the standards that they advise.

In this way the Perfect Guide is in the position of an *imam* whom his students follow. In none of their states or acts can there be found any conflict with the Book and the Sunnah.

Hence, to follow certain 'shaykhs' who do not abide by these principles and yet claim to be shaykhs is very dangerous indeed. Instead of bringing those who follow them closer to Allah, they in fact distance them even further. They become the cause of their squalidness and disaster in place of eternal happiness.

The need for a Perfect Guide

A believer progressing along the path of spirituality encounters many different phenomena. The human heart is like an ocean without a shore. Sometimes the waters in this ocean are still, at other times they are like terrifying waves and whirlpools. In order to pass by the ocean in safety and reach the shores of salvation, one needs a sturdy boat and also a capable and skilful captain. If the captain cannot control his boat in stormy times he will be destroyed by the pounding waves of the ocean. However a capable and skilful captain can steer his boat even in the fiercest of storms.

This is why those who wish to surpass their spiritual ocean and arrive to Allah, Most High, must first find a skilful captain and travel in his company and in the direction given by his advice and instructions. Otherwise he may lose his way in this journey, which harbours endless dangers and hazards, and he may eventually be destroyed.

For those who are at the beginning of their spiritual journey, the trials one encounters in one's life are not so severe nor so intricate.

However as they go deeper into the ocean they encounter dreams in which they are unsure whether they are from Allah or from Satan. They are faced with many different events, spiritual manifestations that differ from individual to individual and states of *inkibad* and *inbisat*[46]. They are in need of guidance from an experienced, skilful and perfect guide for the correct evaluation of these and the precautions that need to be taken.

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46. *inkibad* and *inbisat* are two states of being, the former meaning constriction and the latter meaning expansion (Translators' note)

From its beginnings until today, even though it has been recorded and its teachings written down, the religion of Islam has been a religion which has been learned through practice and then taught, and comprehended as one lives one's life.

Many people do not spare the time to read books. Thus they learn their knowledge of the religion by either listening to the talks of a scholar or observing and modelling their own life on the lives of model personalities. Rather than isolated truths, the human being is in awe of elevated characters and personalities who reflect those truths in their own states and behaviour.

Truths that are learned by observing their embodied examples leave indelible marks on the heart and are more lasting.

The practical transfer of religious knowledge from generation to generation is a sounder method than what one learns from books. This path ensures learning Islam with a complete understanding and application. Learning merely from books can result in many contradictions and doubts in the application of the religion. Thus, the friends of Allah, who practice their Islam with great love, rapture and excitement, have a great share in transferring this religion, unspoiled, from generation to generation.

The required Sufi training for the spiritual perfection of the human being cannot be gained by merely reading books. Despite the knowledge found in books being necessary and beneficial, it must be applied in one's life and lived. Furthermore, in order to solve the likely problems that one is bound to face, one needs an experienced guide, as a model and one who knows the intricacies of this spiritual path. Just as one cannot perform an operation by reading a medical text, and a legal case cannot be solved by reading a text on law, so too in the spiritual realm, practice and application is needed together with isolated truths. Moreover, learning this is similar to work experience as an apprentice to a master. It requires learning by listening to a sound source or observing, without book or pen. Thus, it is the Perfect Guides who perform this service for their students. They are the leaders, role models and guides whose arena is experienced education and application.

They guide them along the path in safety without letting them make mistakes or deviate along the way.

This is why we cannot speak of a proper life of tasawwuf without one dedicating one's heart to a Perfect Guide. Those who set out on this path without a guide generally do not remain in safety due to their slipping of the path. Those who attempt Sufism on their own without undergoing spiritual training at the hands of a guide quickly err and because they have no one to warn and caution them they do not become aware of their mistakes. Most of the time they are deceived by their own *nafs*, by Satan and by misgivings and temptations.

It is due to this need of the human being that Allah has never deprived the world of His friends (*awliya*) or people of guidance. This is undoubtedly a manifestation of our Lord's infinite mercy, compassion and grace.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) has said:

"A group from my community will continue to carry out and establish Allah's commands. Those who leave them without helpers or who oppose them will not harm them in any way. Eventually when they are superior (when they have become successful in their service and made the religion superior) Allah's command will come (that is, the wind that will take the spirits of the believers before Doomsday erupts)" (Muslim, Imare, 174)

"A group from my community will appear at each time, until Doomsday and struggle for the truth to be known and lived. They will be ever subject to the help of Allah and eventually reign superior" (Muslim, Iman 247, Imare 173).

These are the Perfect Guides, the friends of Allah who guide others in inner matters, the righteous scholars, *faqihs*[47], *mufassir*[48] and *muhaddith*[49]. They first practice the religion of Allah and then guide others with their states, their words and their actions.

It must be noted that Perfect Guides are only a means for arriving to Allah and are in no way the ultimate goal. Thus it is incorrect to compare Perfect Guides to priests in Christianity. In Christianity a human being cannot personally turn to Allah without a priest as an intermediary. Perfect Guides on the other hand try to open a path for the servant to turn to His Lord in an acceptable way, personally, directly and of his own will and desire, and, in

47. A *faqih* is a scholar who is qualified at taking rulings from the Holy Qur'an (Translator's note)
48. A *mufassir* is a commentator of the Qur'an (Tranlator's note)
49. A *muhaddith* is a narrator of hadith (Translator's note)

fact, consider himself under His watch at every instant. They try to prepare the spiritual background for this to occur. They advise the servant to eliminate the obstacles of their *nafs*, to save their hearts from the slavery of all other than Him, and turn to Allah only. In fact, after the servant has reached this stage, the guide moves out of the way.

The great guide Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) describes this truth as follows:

“We are only a means for reaching the goal. What is necessary for the traveller (*saliq*) is to reach a state of perfection and leave us to reach their ultimate goal. The way of the trainer is as such: they take the spiritual children of this path, that is the seekers and bound them to the crib of a *tariqat*, then with the nipple of purification, and the milk of *himmah* they nourish them and bring them to the point of arrival at the presence of Allah (*wuslah*); they then wean them off of themselves and allow them to enter the court of Unity. After that the Lord of all the Worlds trains and nourishes them”[50].

Thus the Perfect Guides struggle to bring the believer to a life of *taqwa*. Once the state of *taqwa* is established in the heart, no need remains for any other spiritual compass and Almighty Allah then continues to direct that heart to the truth and to goodness, and bestows upon it the light of foresight and discernment to be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and right from wrong.

The Holy Qur’an states:

‘…**Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge…**’ (Baqara, 2:282).

‘You who have faith! If you have *taqwa* of Allah, He will give you discernment and erase your bad actions from you and forgive you. Allah’s favour is indeed immense’ (Anfal, 8:29)

The establishment of the Golden Chain

As previously mentioned, the true friends of Allah, the Perfect Guides, are the heirs of the prophets who continue the prophetic duty of spiritual train-

50. See Salahaddin ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 97.

ing, cleansing of the heart and purification of the *nafs*. Their greatest source of prosperity and blessings is the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him)who, with the blessed life that he lived was like a living Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an states:

'Say (o My Messenger), 'Anyone who is the enemy of Jibril should know that it was he who brought it down upon your heart, by Allah's authority, confirming what came before, and as guidance and good news for the believers' (Baqara, 2:97).

That is, having been revealed to the heart of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the Qur'an was reflected in his every state; and etched itself in his words, his actions, his conscience and his consciousness, that is into every atom of his being.

Thus, the entire life of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) manifests itself as a living exposition of the Qur'an. Almighty Allah displayed the divine truths and virtues in his model personality.

Through the *zuhd* and *taqwa* that he inspired in his Companions, and under his spiritual guidance and training, he allowed them to live a life within the spiritual atmosphere of the Qur'an. In this way the hearts of the Companions were softened and made gentle, and they would become as if people of Paradise, living as if they could see with the eye of truth both Paradise and Hell. They were enveloped in strong spiritual vitality and unique state of mind[51].

Harith ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the Companions said:

"As I withdrew from the worldly and carnal pleasures of my *nafs*, my days passed in thirst and my nights became sleepless. It was as if I could clearly see the throne of my Lord. It was as if I could see the people of Paradise visiting each other and the people of Hell enemies to each other" (Haysami, Majmau al-Zawaid, I, 57).

With their state the Blessed Companions transferred these lofty feelings, excitement, love, passion, rapture and energy that they received from the

51. See Muslim, Tawbah, 12; Tirmidhi, Jannah, 2/2526.

Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) to later generations and this state of the heart has reached us today through this chain. However since it is not possible to completely describe or explain with the limited nature of words, both written or spoken, this state of the heart and of the spirit, it was instead transferred from heart to heart.

In addition, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) bestowed special and wise knowledge on certain persons of his Companions with elevated potential. This knowledge passed from generation to generation of certain individuals, with a high degree of spirituality and it has reached us today[52].

One day when Muadh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) mounted the animal of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him), the prophet Muhammad told him something but did not allow him to share it with everyone[53].

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"I memorised two pieces of knowledge from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him). One of them I shared with the people. If I had have spread the other I would have gotten my neck broken" (Bukhari, Ilim, 42)[54].

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52. See Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Mas'ud al-Bukhari, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, Kayseri Rashid Efendi Library, pub. 1110, issue. 22b.
53. See Bukhari, Ilim, 49.
54. When **Abu Ayyub al-Ansari** was about to pass away he said**:** "I hid something that I heard from the Messenger of Allah from you" and then he told those around him" (Muslim, Tawbah, 9)

Abdullah ibn Ja'far (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) mounted me on his animal and told me a secret. I will never tell that secret to any one" (Muslim, Hayz, 79).

Anas (MAY Allah be pleased with) narrates:

"…One day I was late in returning to my mother. When I arrived she asked me:

"Why are you late?" I replied:

"The Messenger of Allah sent me to do some chore". My mother asked me:

"What was it?" I replied:

"It is a secret of the Messenger of Allah". My mother then said:

"In that case keep the secret of the Messenger of Allah".

Sabit, who narrated this hadith said:

"Anas said to me: If I were ever to tell that secret to someone I would tell it to you o Sabit" (Ahmad, III, 195).

The special knowledge that was given to Huzayfa, his confidante, by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) can also be analysed. (See Bukhari, Manakib, 25, (IV, 178); Muslim, Fitan, 28; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 26).

Without a doubt the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) openly informed all of his Companions about the fundamental religious commands and prohibitions.

However it is not possible for every person to comprehend to the same degree certain secret knowledge of the metaphysical aspects of the religion. Just as human beings vary in their outer potential and capabilities so too they are not at the same level in the inner potential of their heart. That is, their level of comprehension and perception is not the same. This situation is true for the Companions also.

Thus, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) shared some special knowledge with his Companions in accordance with their capacity and sometimes with their curiosity or interest. This knowledge was then passed on by the Companions to the Tabi'een, in accordance with their ability to perceive it, and then onto later generations. Moreover, this knowledge will continue to be transferred to those competent individuals able to comprehend it until the end of time.

The transfer of state and feelings between the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) took place on account of their outer and inner union (the oneness of their hearts) as a result of reflection. This is why Sufi training takes place more often through keeping company with the righteous, and listening to their discourse.

A sincere and hard-working *murid* can perceive the state of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him)and his Sunnah, by personally observing the state and lifestyle of his guide. As time passed, this flow between the hearts resulted in the natural establishment of a chain.

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him) is the centre and peak of the outer and inner virtues in worship, human transactions and character. After spending 13 years in Mecca struggling to spread the truth of Islam and purify those around him he migrated to Madina. On the way there he was

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In some cases the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) never disclosed certain information to anyone and said:
"If you knew what I knew you would weep much and laugh little" (Bukhari, Qusuf, 2; Muslim, Salat, 112).

shown the cave of Thawr. Here certain phenomena were observed. This cave became like a school in which one could be enveloped in a kind of divine wisdom and in which one's heart could open up.

The stay here lasted for three days and three nights. His friend and the most virtuous of all people after the prophets was Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with his). Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) served the prophet with great loyalty and devotion. In this time in which they were together, which no other person ever experienced, there occurred a transaction of the spirits between the two. In this transaction, Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was honoured with becoming, in the words of the prophet, 'the second of the two of which Allah is the third'[55].

The prophet said to his dear friend:

لَا تَحْزَنْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا

"…Do not grieve. Allah is surely with us."[56] In making this statement he disclosed the nature of the secret of being with Allah. The Sufis consider this moment, that is the state of the heart finding peace and contentment with Allah, as being the beginning of the inculcation of *khafi dhikr*, that is secret or private *dhikr*.

It was through the blessing of such transactions of the heart that Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was able to perceive with a deep capacity, the words, actions, states and behaviour of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him), that many of the other Companions were incapable of perceiving. As a result Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him), the prophet's inner and outer heir, became the first link after the Messenger of Allah, in the Golden Chain that would continue until the end of time.

After that, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) became the haven of that lofty wisdom and sea of mystery. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him)taught '*jahri dhikr'* to Ali as well as to some other of the Companions.[57] In time, the chains of those Companions came to an end. Only the

55. See Bukhari, Tafsir, 9/9; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 1.
56. Tawbah, 9:40.
57. See Ahmad, IV, 124.

chains that go back to Abu Bakr and to Ali have continued until our day. From time to time these too have diverged into different branches.

In this book we will be concerned with only one of the Noble Chains that has reached us today from the Naqshi Khalidi branch of the tariqat.

❁

Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“The inculcation of dhikr first occurred in the heart of Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) and found its form there. Then it passed onto Salman Farisi (may Allah be pleased with him), then to Ja’far Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on him), then to Bayazid Bistami (ay Allah’s mercy be upon him), then to Abu al-Hasan Harakani (may Allah have mercy on him) and then to the great shaykh Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him) and from there it reached me[58].

Salah ibn Mubarak Bukhari, who was present in the talks of Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) lists Qasim ibn Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him) between Ja’far Sadiq and Salman Farisi[59].

Some of the friends of Allah, at the head of which is Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him), have, in addition to benefitting from their own shaykhs, also benefitted from the state of being an *uwaysi*, that is, benefitting from the spirits of those shaykhs who lived before them.

Throughout history many books have been written to identify the chains in tasawwuf and these have been called ‘*silsile’i name’*. Those that have included in them a friend of Allah from the *ahl al-bayt* have, out of respect and reverence, been called ‘*silsilat al-dhahab’* or Golden Chain.

The need for a Noble Chain

In the first centuries there was a requirement for a chain of narration in various Islamic sciences such as *qiraat*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, and *fiqh*.

58. Abdulkhaliq Ghujdawani, *Risale-i Sahibiyya* (Makamat-i Yusuf Hamdani), (pub. Said Nafisi), *Farhang Iran-zemin,* I/1 (1332 hijri solar.,/1953), p. 81.
59. Salahaddin ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, ibid, p. 60.

The scholars of Islam who narrated the hadith and opinions on commentary of the Companions, the Tabi'een and other scholars would look for a chain that came from them until that time.

In fact after this knowledge began to be recorded in books and until today, the chain of those teachers who taught those books was recorded and was considered necessary in order for one's knowledge to be given consideration. Today also there are many scholars who abide by this chain and take and hand out *ijaza* or licence to teach.

In addition tasawwuf *rijali* (study of narrators) recorded which teacher they received their spiritual training and education from, and recorded the name of their teacher's teacher and passed it on to their students. In this way people were able to receive this most vital training in the most sound way and in accordance with their way.

This system of the chain (*silsilah*) and licence to teach (*ijaza*) was considered absolutely necessary in order to preserve the sciences, both outer and spiritual, to avoid the introduction of errors and innovations, to preserve its purity and keep it intact.

Even more meticulousness and care was taken in preserving the methods and rulings gained by years of experience in matters of Islamic *adab* and morals. The sound transfer of this knowledge of these sciences to later generations by competent, trained and licenced people from this chain was considered an absolute requirement. These *ijazet name* or licences to teach which complied with the chain and were subject to a particular method and guaranteed competency; it prevented the deception of 'false' shaykhs who tried to present themselves as being perfect shaykhs.

Remembering the righteous is a source of blessings

Remembering and reciting the names of those individuals found in the Noble Chain from time to time has been considered a method in training in tasawwuf.

This method is resorted to in the hope that mercy envelops the heart and the one remembering receives a share from the beautiful state of those individuals.

Sufyan ibn Uyayna and other great scholars have said:

“Mercy rains down on assemblies in which the Righteous (*saliheen*) are remembered”[60].

Muhammad ibn Yunus has said:

“I have never seen anything more beneficial for the heart than remembering the righteous”[61].

When the friends of Allah are remembered, the cautionary events and stories in their lives and their anecdotes full of wisdom revive the hearts. A desire for their model states arises and the spirit turns towards these elevated states. In this way mercy, blessings and tranquillity arise.

Consequently in order to be with the righteous, not just outwardly, but also with the heart and the spirit reciting the Noble Chain is a source of great mercy and blessings. The writing of various books that include the stories of the friends of Allah is in order to inspire the believers to come closer to them with love.

Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The stories of righteous scholars and their good character have always appeared more pleasing to me than most of fiqh. What is narrated in these is the *adab* and good character of these friends of Allah. The Holy Qur’an states:

‘They are the ones Allah has guided, so be guided by their guidance... (al An‘am, 6:90)’”[62]

Some of the friends of Allah have said:

“The stories of the righteous are like an army from the armies of Allah. Through them Almighty Allah makes firm the heart in uprightness, of those of His friends”[63].

The proof for this is the following verse:

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60. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* VII, 285; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *az Zuhd,* Beirut 1420, s. 264; Ajluni, *Kashfu al Khafa,* II, 70.
61. Ibn Jawzii, *Sıfatu as Safwa,* I, 18.
62. Qadi Iyad, *Tartibu al Madarik,* Maghrib 1965, I, 23.
63. Qadi Iyad, *ibid,* I, 23.

"We have given you all this news about the Messengers so We can make your heart firm by means of it. The truth has come to you in this and an admonishment and reminder to the believers. (Hud, 11:120).

According to this, the stories of the prophets and the righteous strengthen the faith of the believers. They are a source of consolation and stream of peace for those in distress; and uprightness for those in ease.

Because the lives of the friends of Allah are embodied examples, reading about them increases the determination, efforts and spirituality of the believers. They beautify the character, without having to use verbal instructions such as 'Do this or do not do that'. They teach us the inner face of and the wisdom in events. They are a means for us to take as our examples the beautiful states of perfect believers who lived in the past.

There are other reasons for reciting the Noble Chain at various times. A person should at least know the individuals who connect him to the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), whose path he is following and who he is benefitting from. By remembering them from time to time he can establish love for them in his heart and ensure a feeling of belonging and membership of the path he is following.

It is also possible for the *murid* to use the teachers from this Noble Chain as a means to supplicate to Allah.

Abu Said Muhammad Hadimi has said:

"Whoever recites the chain of shaykhs, after '*Hatm'i Khwajagan*[64], during his *dhikr*, before beginning *dhikr* and after completing his *wird*, he will be subject to various advancement and openings. The person reading the *wird* and the *dhikr* should recite the chain of shaykhs especially at times when he feels a spirituality overcome him. He can also read the Noble Chain in the hope of removing all distress, grief and sorrow, for the attainment of one's aims, for the fulfilling of needs or for the cure of illnesses. In addition one can write down the Blessed Chain and carry it with him for the blessings it contains"[65].

64. This is a type of *dhikr* which begins and ends with the recitation of the Fatiha. The term '*hatm-i khwajagan'* means the '*hatim* of the masters' (Translator's note).
65. Muhammed Amin Al Kurdi al Arbili, *Tanwiru al Qulub fiy Muamalati Allamu al Ghuyub,* Aleppo 1411, p. 598.

Tawassul and Istighasa with the friends of Allah

Tawassul means to take something as a means (*wasila*). A *wasila* is everything that allows one to come closer to Allah or to have one's needs met.

Allah, the Almighty, states in the Holy Qur'an:

"You who have faith! Have *taqwa* of Allah and seek the means of drawing near to Him…' (Maida, 5:35)

Tawassul is one of the ways to pray and one of the gates through which one can turn to Allah. The true aim in *tawassul* is Allah, Most High. The *wasila*, or the means taken, is just a tool that allows one to come closer to Allah.

Almighty Allah orders us to turn towards the Ka'bah when we pray. This does not mean that we worship the Ka'bah. In the same way, kissing the Black Stone is done as servitude to Allah and following the path of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

A believer who takes as his means a certain thing or person takes it in the belief that Allah loves that means. In no way and at no time does he see that means as something that can either benefit or harm him.

A man used to frequently visit Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) for a need, however, Uthman would not pay any attention to him nor would he fulfil his need. This man then encountered Uthman ibn Hunayf (may Allah be pleased with him) and complained to him. Uthman ibn Hunayf advised him:

"Take your cup and make your ablutions, then go to the masjid and perform two rakats of prayer. At the end of your prayer make the following supplication and then state your need:

"O Allah! I ask you and turn to you on behalf of the prophet of Mercy, the prophet Muhammad. O Muhammad. I turn to my Lord using him as a means for the fulfilment of this need of mine. O Allah make him my intercessor".

That man went and did as he was told. After that he went to the door of Uthman ibn Affan. The doorman took him by the hand and sat him down on a cushion next to Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). Uthman asked him:

"What is your need?" The man told him. Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) immediately granted his need and said:

"It never occurred to me until now that you needed something. If you ever need anything else come to me immediately".

Having had his need fulfilled the man then left the presence of the Caliph and went to Uthman ibn Hunayf (may Allah be pleased with him), saying:

"May Allah reward you with good. Until you spoke to the Caliph about me, he did not fulfil my needs nor pay me any attention".

Uthman ibn Hunayf (may Allah be pleased with him) was surprised and said:

"By Allah I did not speak to the Caliph. However I witnessed such an event:

A blind man once came to the Messenger of Allah and said:

"O Messenger of Allah. Beg Allah to cure the illness in my eye. It is very difficult for me to be blind".

The prophet replied:

"If you wish you can be patient, this will be better for you". The blind man said:

"O Messenger of Allah. I have no one to take me by the hand and guide me. My situation causes me great hardship. Please pray that my eyes are cured".

The prophet then said:

"Take this cup and make your ablutions. Then pray two rakats of prayer. After that supplicate as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّى أَسْأَلُكَ وَأَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ الرَّحْمَةِ.

يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنِّى تَوَجَّهْتُ بِكَ إِلٰى رَبِّى فِى حَاجَتِى هٰذِهِ لِتُقْضٰى لِيَ.

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَشَفِّعْهُ فِيَّ

“O Allah! I ask you and turn to you on behalf of the prophet of Mercy, the prophet Muhammad. O Muhammad. I turn to my Lord using you as a means for the fulfilment of this here need of mine. O Allah make him my intercessor”.

“By Allah we had not yet parted and the conversation between us grew long, when that blind man came and stood next to the prophet. It was as if he had never been blind, and he was completely cured”[66].

When we read this prayer we should say ‘Ya Rasulallah’ instead of ‘Ya Muhammad’ as this is more appropriate and we will not have erred in showing our respect for him.[67]

One time when there was a drought during the caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he took the prophet’s uncle Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) with him to make a prayer for rain. Using him as a *wasila* he supplicated to Allah as follows:

“O Allah! When we prayed to you for rain using the prophet as a *wasila* You gave us rain. Now we ask You using the prophet’s uncle as a *wasila*. Bestow rain upon us”. After that it rained and the people were reunited with water (Bukhari, Istiska, 3).

In truth it is Allah, Most High, who helps us and brings about our wishes and hears our supplications.

Even though Allah is the true Owner of everything, affairs are attributed to people. Such expressions are used not in a true sense but figuratively.

Almighty Allah has given permission for people to ask each other for help and has commanded us to reply to the one who asks us for help.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used the expression ‘*istighaza’* which means ‘to ask for help’ in his following words:

إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ تَدْنُو يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْعَرَقُ نِصْفَ الْأُذُنِ
فَبَيْنَا هُمْ كَذٰلِكَ اسْتَغَاثُوا بِآدَمَ ثُمَّ بِمُوسَى ثُمَّ بِمُحَمَّدٍ r

66. See Tirmidhi, Dawat, 118/3578; Ibn Maja, Iqama, 189; Nasai, *Qubra,* VI, 169; Ahmad, IV, 138; Hakim, I, 707-708; Bayhaqi, *Dalail,* V, 464; Haysami, II, 279.
67. Allama Yusuf ibn Ismail an Nabhani, *al Fadailu Muhammadiyya,* Aleppo 1414, p. 230.

"On the Day of Judgement the sun will come so close that the sweat of people will accumulate and reach up to half way of their ears. In this state they will ask the prophet Adam, then the prophet Musa and then the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)for help" (Bukhari, Zakat, 52).

Just as Almighty Allah has given His angels and His prophets certain disposal to act in a particular way He has also given them to some of His righteous servants. Their disposal while alive or even their spirits after they have passed away is similar to that of the angels. They are in no need of physical contact nor any instrument or means, because they are not subject to the laws that we know.

A personified example of the reality of *tawassul* and *istighasa* is from our recent history during the Battle of the Dardanelles. The active and verbal prayers of the Muslim soldiers, whose hearts were filled with faith, and their *istiana*, *istighasa* and *tawassul* were granted and when all physical strength and opportunities were lost they experienced much success and victory by the grace of Allah.

The English historian and commander from the Battle of the Dardanelles later admitted this truth as follows:

"We were not defeated by the physical strength of the Turks, but rather by their spiritual might. At one stage they had no gunpowder left to shoot but we witnessed the powers that descended from the heavens to help them..."

In short, asking out of respect for the prophets and righteous servants of Allah when praying for something will draw the mercy of Allah even more. That believer will have used those that Allah loves as his *wasila*, or means of seeking refuge in Him and asking from Him.

However, prayer is only to Allah. When we pray using Allah's beloved's as *wasila*, we should not ask from them personally but rather from Allah only. The sole absolute Doer of anything (*Fail'i mutlaq*) is Almighty Allah.

Some people make a grave mistake when they ask directly from righteous individuals in their absence or when they visit their graves, saying: "O such and such. Give me a cure. Fulfil this need of mine". This can open the door to *shirk*. Even though certain interpretations can be made for such

expressions, one must shun with intensity such ignorant words that can harm the essence of one's belief in the oneness of Allah.

We should meticulously avoid any such expressions that infer that anything other than Allah has absolute disposal over the administration and management of the universe or in solving difficulties.

May our Lord bestow upon our hearts blessings and prosperity from the spirits of the true friends of Allah and in particular those from the Golden Chain.

Amen...

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ فَبِهُدٰيهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ

"Those are they whom Allah guideth so follow their guidance"
(al-En'âm, 90)

The Golden Chain

1. Muhammad Mustafa (peace and blessings be upon him)
2. Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him)
3. Salman Farisi (may Allah be pleased with him)
4. Qasim ibn Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with him)
5. Ja’far Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him)
6. Bayazid Bistami (may Allah have mercy on him)
7. Abu al-Hasan Haraqani (may Allah have mercy on him)
8. Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him)
9. Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him)
10. Abdulkhaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him)
11. Arif Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him)
12. Mahmud Faghnawi (may Allah have mercy on him)
13. Ali Ramitani (may Allah have mercy on him)
14. Muhammad Baba Simasi (may Allah have mercy on him)
15. Sayyid Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on him)
16. Bahauddin Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him)
17. Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on him)
18. Yaqub Charhi (may Allah have mercy on him)
19. Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him)
20. Muhammad Zahid (may Allah have mercy on him)
21. Dervish Muhammad Samarkandi (may Allah have mercy on him)
22. Khwaja Muhammad Imkanagi (may Allah have mercy on him)
23. Muhammad Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him)
24. Imam-ı Rabbani Ahmad Faruqi (may Allah have mercy on him)
25. Muhammad Masum Sirhindi (may Allah have mercy on him)
26. Muhammad Sayfuddin Sirhindi (may Allah have mercy on him)
27. Sayyid Nur Muhammad Badayuni (may Allah have mercy on him)
28. Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan (may Allah have mercy on him)
29. Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him)
30. Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him)
31. Sayyid Taha al-Hakkari (may Allah have mercy on him)
32. Taha al-Hariri (may Allah have mercy on him)
33. Muhammed As‘ad Erbili (may Allah have mercy on him)
34. Mahmud Sami Ramazanoğlu (may Allah have mercy on him)
35. Hace Musa Topbas (may Allah have mercy on him)

1. The blessed Messenger of Allah MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA (peace and blessings be upon him) [571 - 632]

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) is the most elevated and select of created beings. He is a wonder of art, manifesting Divine power. He is a unique human being in that he was addressed by Allah as 'My beloved'[68]. The Holy Qur'an is filled with praise and descriptions of his elevatedness. Some of the verses directly praise him whilst others do so implicitly.

Allah bestowed upon him such a magnificent rank that mankind is unable to truly perceive what he was. It is not possible to reach to the level of his perfect virtue nor is it possible to completely describe him with words, which are limited. Our description of him with language is a mere drop from the ocean.

Some of the verses that indicate the lofty station of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in the sight of Allah are as follows:

"We have only sent you as a mercy to all the worlds' (Anbiya, 21:107)

"Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah.. .(Nisa, 4:80)

"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you for your wrong actions. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'

68. See Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3616; Darimi, Muqaddima, 8; Ahmad, VI, 241; Haysami, IX, 29; Ali al Muttaqi, *Kanzu al Ummal,* XI, 406/31893.

Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' Then if they turn away, Allah does not love the unbelievers (Al-i Imran, 3:31-32)'.

'**Those who pledge you their allegiance pledge allegiance to Allah…** (Fath, 48:10).

Imam Malik ibn Anas (may Allah have mercy on him) once said to the Caliph Abu Ja'far ibn Mansur:

"O Commander of the Believers. Do not raise your voice in this *masjid an-nabi* (the prophet's mosque). Allah, Most High, has taught a community *adab* in this matter by saying:

'You who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet and do not be as loud when speaking to him as you are when speaking to one another, lest your actions should come to nothing without your realising it' (Hujurat, 49:2).

He has praised others with the following expression:

'**Those who lower their voices when they are with the Messenger of Allah are people whose hearts Allah has tested for *taqwa*. They will have forgiveness and an immense reward** (Hujurat, 49:3).

And he has censured another group of people as follows:

'**As for those who call out to you from outside your private quarters, most of them do not use their intellect'** (Hujurat, 49:4).

To respect the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) after his demise is like respecting him while he was still alive".

Abu Ja'far bowed his head at these words and said:

"O Imam! Should I turn to the Qibla and pray or should I turn to the Messenger of Allah (his tomb) and pray?

Imam Malik responded:

"Why should you turn your face from him? He is a means for both you and your father Adam to reach Allah. On the contrary turn to him and ask for him to intercede for you and Allah will allow him to intercede for you. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

'…**If only when they wronged themselves they had come to you and asked Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them they would have found Allah Ever-Returning, Most Merciful'** (Nisa, 4:64).

Another verse which demonstrates the care and love that Allah shows for His Messenger is as follows:

'**Do not make the Messenger's summoning of you the same as your summoning of one another**…' (Nur, 24:63).

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) commented on this verse as follows:

"The people were addressing Allah's Messenger as 'O Muhammad' or 'O Abu al-Qasim'. Allah Most High forbade such addresses in order to exalt the honour of His prophet. After that the people began to address him as such: 'O nabiullah' (Prophet of Allah) and 'O Rasulallah' (Messenger of Allah)" (Abu Nuaym, *Dalail,* I, 46)

Moreover in contrast to the other prophets, Almighty Allah Himself never addressed His Beloved using his name but rather addressed him as 'O Messenger' or 'O prophet'. In this way He taught us a nice lesson in adab.

The honouring and favouring of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) by Allah is not limited to these examples and will continue on forever. A verse from the Holy Qur'an states:

'**And assuredly, He will increasingly grant you his favours one after another, and you will be contented'** (Duha, 93:5)**.**

One day the Companions were talking amongst themselves. They were expressing their wonder about how Allah befriended a created human being, that is the prophet Ibrahim (*al-Khalil*), how He spoke to the prophet Musa, how the prophet Isa was His Word and Spirit and His selection of the prophet Adam.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) approached them and listened to what they were saying. He then said:

"Indeed, it is exactly as you say". He then mentioned his own elevated characteristics:

"I am the master of the messengers and I am not boasting. I am the seal of the prophets, without boasting. I will be the first to intercede (for my community) and the first whose intercession will be accepted but I do not say this in order to boast" (Darimi, Muqaddima, 8).

"On the Day of Judgement when the earth is split open I will be the first to be resurrected but I am not boasting. The Banner of Praise will be given to me, but I do not boast about this. I will be the master of the people on the Day of Judgement but there is no boast. I will be the first to enter Paradise on the Day of Judgement but I do not make this a means to boast." (Darimi, Muqaddima, 8. In addition see Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3616).

It is not possible to completely perceive the elevated nature of the prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Almighty Allah loves him and has bestowed upon him all superior characteristics.

The following is from the beautiful poem praising the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) by **Ibn al-Amin Mahmud Kemal:**

"O my master who is enveloped in light from head to toe. Almighty Allah has favoured you with a special favour in that He did not give you a shadow. However on that intense Day the shade from your shadow will fall upon the heads of all of mankind, and your intercession will reach everybody".

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) is the 'Best of Examples'

Mankind has been sent to this world to be examined and so he has been created in such a way that he is capable of doing both good and evil. This is why his life, in both his inner and outer world, is spent in the struggle between good and evil. Our faculties of intelligence, cognition, foresight (*iz'an)* and will are not enough to allow good to overcome evil. If these had been sufficient, Allah, Most High, would not have endorsed Adam, the first human being, with prophethood. At all times, Allah, Most High, has guided mankind to the truth and to goodness through His divine revelation and through His prophets. He has also sent Books that reinforce the intelligence and the heart and has subjected His servants to spiritual training.

Moreover, the training of the human being takes place more so by taking someone as their example and by the inclination to imitate another. That is, the human being is ever in need of a model. The masses then take shape according to that model. For a human being to take someone as their model is dependent on admiration and adoration. The lover imitates the one they love to the degree that they love them. They never remove them from their heart, nor cease talking about them. Furthermore, in general, people generally fall in love with good character and personality.

Our Lord, who is infinitely merciful to His servants, bestowed upon us His most beloved and merciful prophet as a unique and unparalleled model and best guide. Almighty Allah's love for the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and His adorning him with the best of character is undoubtedly a manifestation of his love and mercy for us.

By bestowing upon us this most beautiful and perfect example, Allah Most High has willed that we adopt a share of that loftiness.

He says in the Holy Qur'an:

'**You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah, for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much'** (Ahzab, 33:21).

One day **Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him)** said:

"I looked at the Holy Qur'an and saw that it commanded obedience to the Messenger of Allah in thirty three places". Then he read the following verse:

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ اَمْرِهٖٓ اَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ اَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ

'...Those who oppose his command should beware of a testing trial (*fitna*) coming to them or a painful punishment striking them' (Nur, 24:63).

He then repeated this verse over and over again and asked himself:

"What is this fitna that the verse says will come? It is *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and *kufur* (unbelief). That trial will probably come to the person as follows: Whenever a person rejects a word of the prophet, there will arise in his heart crookedness and his heart will begin to boil. Eventually

that person's heart will stray completely away from guidance and destroy its owner".

After saying this Ahmad ibn Hanbal then read the following verse:

'No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their judge in the disputes that break out between them, and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely' (Nisa, 4:65)[69].

One day a man said to **Malik ibn Anas (may Allah have mercy on him)**:

"Shall I enter ihram in the Masjid an-Nabi or at Dhu al-Hulayfa?" Imam Malik responded:

"At Dhu al-Hulayfa" That man said:

"I entered ihram at the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah".

Imam Malik then recited the following verse:

'...Those who oppose his command should beware of a testing trial (*fitna*) coming to them or a painful punishment striking them' (Nur, 24:63)[70].

It is stated in another verse:

'**As for those who abuse Allah and His Messenger, Allah's curse is on them in this world and the hereafter. He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them'** (Ahzab, 33:57).

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) displayed an unparalleled beauty and perfection at every stage and aspect of his life.

All beautiful behaviour whether in summary or in detail, can be found in him. Thus, every human being can find in his noble life and his Sunnah, the best and most perfect of behaviour as their model.

Throughout history the believers who have loved the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and followed his Sunnah with a profound adulation have been the people of *taqwa;* that is the true masters of tasawwuf. Their love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be

69. Ibn Batta al-Uqbari, *al-Ibanat al-Kubra,* no: 99; Ibn Taymiyyah, *as-Sarimu al-Maslul,* Beirut 1417, I, 59.
70. Ibn Batta al-Uqbari, ibid, no: 100.

upon him) is a voluntary and unbiased love. What has allowed him to remain vibrant and alive in their hearts and enabled Islam to reach distant lands, in the face of oppression and persecution, has been this love and the feelings of selflessness that it brings. A life of Islam as described by the Quranic verses and by the hadith, which is the spiritual life of the prophet and his Companions, is the most perfect state aimed at by the people of tasawwuf. The prosperity of the heart attained by righteous people, who imitate the life and beautiful state of the prophet in accordance with their opportunity, is transmitted from heart to heart through spiritual reflection. That is, the greatest aim of the people of tasawwuf is to approach as closely as possible the life of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his worship

Having preferred to be a slave prophet as opposed to a king prophet the Messenger of Allah[71] (peace and blessings be upon him) gave great importance to worship that allowed a person to come closer to Allah. Every state of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was an act of worship and he always tried to remain clean and pure in His presence. For this reason he would always be in a state of ablution and encouraged the believers to take ablution as often as possible[72]. He would renew his ablution before every prayer[73], and advise others to take ablution before going to bed[74]. Outer cleanliness brings about inner cleanliness. Cleansing and purifying oneself in all aspects results in friendship with Allah. Allah, Most High, only befriends those who purify themselves of filth and impurities.

His salat

Salat, the ritual prayer, was the delight of the prophet's eye and the continuation of the *Mi'raj* (the Ascension). He was extremely meticulous about

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71. See Abdurrazaq,Musannaf, III, 183; Haysami, IX, 192.
72. See Ibn Majah, Taharah, 4; *Muwatta'*, Taharah, 36; Ahmad, V, 276, 282; Darimi, Taharah, 2.
73. See Tirmidhi, Taharah, 44/60; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 66/171.
74. See Bukhari, Wudu', 75; Muslim, Dhikr, 56.

the obligatory prayers (the *fard*). He would perform his prayer at the beginning of the allocated time and in congregation.

When the prayer was commanded very soon after he became a prophet, he prayed in congregation, from the first day, with his wife Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) and with Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). In order to perform his prayer in peace he would distance himself from Mecca and go to a quiet and tranquil valley to perform his prayer. Day by day the small congregation that he formed grew ever larger and soon enveloped the entire realm.

In addition to the obligatory prayers, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would spend his days and nights in supererogatory (*nafilah*) worship. For instance, the *sunnah* prayers that he would pray before and after the *fard*, the *tahajjud* prayer that he would perform in the late night, the prayer of *ishraq* that he would pray 45 minutes after the sun rose, the *duha* prayer that he would pray when the heat of the sun began to increase, the *awwabin* prayer that he would pray after the evening prayer (*maghrib*), the four rakats of prayer that he would pray before going to bed, the prayers that he would perform as he renewed his ablution throughout the day, and the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer that he would pray when he entered any mosque. These are all illustrations of how the blessed heart of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was in a constant state of prayer.

Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would set out for battle he would perform the prayer. He would pray long *nafilah* prayers whilst sitting on his camel during a journey, and when he returned he would first stop by the mosque to pray two rakats of prayer before going home.

Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was pleased at some event, or received some good news, or his prayer was accepted he would immediately prostrate and pray to thank Allah for this favour[75].

Whenever he recited a verse from the Qur'an that mentioned '*sajdah'* or prostration, he would immediately prostrate. Whenever he met with sorrow or was grieved he would find consolation in prayer[76].

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75. See Abu Dawud, Jihad, 162/2774-2775; Ibn Majah, Salat, 192.
76. See Muslim, Dhikr, 83; Abu Dawud, Tatawwu', 22/1319.

He would immediately stand to pray in the face of extraordinary phenomena such as solar or lunar eclipses or earthquakes, as unique manifestations of divine majesty[77].

Whenever he asked for a need from Allah he would pray. When there was a drought he would pray the prayer of *istiska*. He would perform the prayer of *tasbih* from time to time. Whenever he had to make a decision about something he would perform the prayer of *istikhara* and ask for the best from Allah. During the month of Ramadan, he would pray the long *tarawih* prayer.

When we look at the Holy Qur'an we see indications for each of these prayers[78].

The Messenger of Allah would perform his prayer slowly and in great reverence (*khushu*), complying with its entire requisite conditions (*ta'dil-i arkan*). He would give himself completely to prayer. Those who saw him would find it impossible to describe the beauty in his prayer.

While praying, sounds like the boiling of water could be heard coming from his chest and due to his crying[79].

One time during a battle, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had stopped over at a place between Dajnan and Usfan. The idolaters said:

"They have such a prayer which is more precious to them than their fathers or their children. This prayer is the late afternoon prayer (*asr*). Be ready and we will attack them all together".

Upon this the angel Gabriel came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and revealed the 102nd verse of the chapter Nisa, which taught them how to pray in congregation during a battle. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 4/21)

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77. See Bukhari, Kusuf, 2-4; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih,* VII, 68, 100. Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* II, 220.
78. See al Baqara, 45, 153; Al-i Imran, 41, 113; Hud, 114; Hijr, 98-99; Isra, 78-79, 107; Maryam, 58; Anbiya, 130; Nur, 36; Furqan, 64; Shu'ara, 218-219; Sajda, 15-16; Sad, 17-19; Zumar, 9; Mu'min, 55; Fath, 29; Qaf, 39-40; Tur, 48-49; Insan, 26; Alaq, 19… Ibn Abbas says that where the word *tasbih* ismentioned in the Holy Qur'an, it generally has the meanings of prayer (Tabari, *Tafsir,* XIX, 191, [Nur, 36]). In the Hadith, the word *tasbih* is seen to mean the supererogatory prayer. See Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5; Muslim, Hayd 71, Masajid, 26; Abu Dawud, Jihad, 44/2551…
79. Abu Dawud, Salat, 156-157/904; Nasai, Sahw, 18.

Thus, the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) continued to perform their prayer on time and in congregation even during the battle.

Umm Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

“Whoever performs twelve rakats of nafilah prayer, in addition to the five obligatory prayers, Allah Most High will build for him a house in Paradise”.

From the day that I heard this good news from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) I continued to perform these prayers.

Other narrators of this hadith, who narrated it from each other, also continued to perform these prayers (Muslim, Musafirin, 103).

Abu Qatada (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

“One day I entered the Masjid al-Nabi. I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) sitting there amongst his Companions. I went to them and sat with them. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to me:

“What has prevented you from performing two rakats of prayer before you sit?” I replied:

“O Messenger of Allah. When I saw you and the people sitting I came and sat with you.

He replied:

“Whenever one of you enters a mosque, let him not sit down before he prays two rakat or prayer” (Muslim, Musafirin, 70).

The Companions also received their share of the eagerness of the prophet for the prayer. Some examples are as follows:

A group of merchants once came and stayed in the musalla[80] of Madina. The Caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said to Abdurrahman ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with him):

80. *Musalla* is the name given to a wide space allocated for the community to pray together on Fridays, the eid prayer and the funeral prayer. In the beginning there would be places like this arranged in the outskirts of the cities for such congregational prayers and the eid and Friday

"If you are available come and let us guard this group against thieves?"

Abdurrahman accepted and they began to guard the group for the entire night. During this time they prayed as much *nafilah* prayer as Allah allowed. (Ibn Sa'd, III, 301; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib,* p. 77)

One time when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was returning to Madina from a battle he stopped over somewhere. He turned to his Companions and asked them:

"Who will be on guard tonight?"

Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Emigrants, and Abbad ibn Bishr (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Helpers, immediately replied:

"We will take guard o Messenger of Allah".

Abbad (may Allah be pleased him) then turned to Ammar (may Allah be pleased him) and asked him:

"Which part of the night do you want to be on guard: at the start or at the end? Ammar (may Allah be pleased him) replied:

"I will take guard during the last part of the night". He then lay down on his side and slept.

Abbad (may Allah be pleased him) then began to perform the prayer. At that point a pagan arrived and realising that the standing silhouette was a guard he shot his arrow at him. The arrow hit Abbad (may Allah be pleased him) who took it out and continued to pray. The man then shot a second and a third time and each arrow hit Abbad (may Allah be pleased him). Each time he remained standing and removed the arrows and continued to pray. He then bowed down in *ruku* and then made the prostration. After finishing his prayer he woke his friend and said:

"Wake up. I have been wounded".

Ammar (may Allah be pleased him) immediately rose and when the pagan saw them he realised that they had seen him and he fled. When Ammar

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prayers would be performed in such places rather than in various mosques as today. In this way the entire population of the city would get together.

(may Allah be pleased him) saw Abbad (may Allah be pleased him) bleeding, he said to him:

"Subhanallah! Why did you not wake me when the first arrow flew?"

Abbad (may Allah be pleased him) gave the following awesome reply which showed his passion and eagerness for the prayer and his deep reverence while performing it:

"I was reciting a particular chapter (from the Qur'an) and I did not want to interrupt my prayer without finishing it. However when the arrows continued to come one after the other, I was forced to stop reciting it and bowed down. I swear by Allah that had I not feared losing the privilege of guarding these people that the Messenger of Allah commanded, I would have preferred to die rather than interrupt my prayer" (Abu Dawud, Taharah, 78/198; Ahmad, III, 344; Bayhaqi, *Dalail,* III, 459)

After that it became a habit of the Companions to perform the prayer whenever they were on guard or had made a stop-over[81].

It was the habit of Ali (may Allah be pleased him) that while he was displaying an unparalleled bravery on the battlefield, he would also be performing his worship in rare peace and reverence. During one battle an arrow struck his foot. Due to the great pain he felt, others were unable to take out the arrow. Ali said to them:

"Let me stand to pray and then take it out".

They did as he said and without any difficulty they were able to remove the arrow. When Ali (may Allah be pleased him) finished praying he asked them:

"What did you do?"

They replied: "We removed it".

The body of Ali (may Allah be pleased him) during prayer was in a state of such reverence and felt such spiritual pleasure that he had literally lost touch with the world...

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81. See Abu Dawud, Jihad, 44/2551.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) indicates the connection of the heart that a true believer should have with the prayer:

"When the believer passes away and is placed in his grave, he will be shown an image of the sun setting. The deceased believer will sit rubbing his eyes and say:

"Leave me so I can perform the prayer" ***(Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 32).***

The pre-dawn

During the pre-dawn, which is the most fruitful time of the day Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would enter a different realm and be enveloped in a completely different spiritual state.

Allah, Most High, has said to His Most Beloved to benefit from the prosperity of the night:

'**And stay awake for prayer during part of the night as a supererogatory action for yourself. It may well be that your Lord will raise you to a Praiseworthy Station'** (Isra, 17:79).

The *tahajjud* prayer was commanded to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) when he became a prophet. After the verse that commanded him to read the book of the universe, mankind and the Qu'ran in the name of Allah, he was commanded to perform the ritual prayer[82] and the *tahajjud* prayer.

In this verse the time, quality and wisdom of the *tahajjud* prayer are explained in detail:

'You who are enwrapped in your clothing!

stay up at night, except a little,

half of it, or a little less,

or a little more, and recite the Qur'an distinctly.

We will impose a weighty Word upon you.

82. See Muddathir, 3.

Certainly rising at night has a stronger effect and is more conducive to concentration.

In the daytime much of your time is taken up by business matters.

Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely.

Lord of the East and West –there is no god but Him– so take Him as your Guardian.

Be steadfast in the face of what they say and cut yourself off from them – but courteously' (Muzzammil, 73:1-10)

After that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) never abandoned performing the prayer during this most fruitful time of the night. He would seek forgiveness, remember Allah, recite from the Qur'an, and supplicate to Allah.

Even when he was ill or did not have the strength to stand, he would revive this time of the night whilst sitting (Abu Dawud, Tatawwu', 18/1307).

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) the prophet's wife, has informed us:

"...Whenever the Messenger of Allah would wake up at night, he would first perform four rakats of prayer which were of such beauty and length that I cannot describe. He would then perform another four rakats of prayer and these were also of such beauty and length that I cannot describe. Then he would pray three more rakats of prayer..." (Bukhari, Tahajjud 16, Tarawih 1; Muslim, Musafirin 125).

Huzayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One night I was performing the prayer with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He began to recite from the chapter Baqara. I said to myself: "He will probably bow down at the 100th verse". When he came to the 100th verse, he continued to recite. I said to myself: "He will probably perform two rakats with this chapter". He continued to recite. I said to myself: "He will bow down after he finishes the chapter". However he still did not finish, but began to recite from the chapter Nisa. When he finished

that he went on to chapter Al'i Imran[83]. He was reading very slowly and when he came to the verses of glorification, he would say: "Subhanallah". When he came to a verse about seeking refuge in Allah, he would seek refuge in Allah. He then bowed down and began to say: "*Subhana Rabbi al Azim*". His *ruku* lasted for as long as his *qiyam*. Then he stood upright and said: "*Sami allahu liman hamida, Rabbena laka al hamd*". He then stayed for a period almost as long as he was in *ruku*. Then he bowed down in prostration, saying: "*Subhana Rabbi al 'Ala*". His prostration lasted for almost as long as his standing" (Muslim, Musafirin, 203).

Rabia ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him), who served the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) narrates:

"I would sleep by the door of the Messenger of Allah and provide him his water for him to take his ablution. A long time after he had stood to pray I would hear him say: '*Sami Allahu liman hamidah'* and a long time into the night I would hear him say: "*Alhamdulillahi Rabbi'l Alemin'* (Ahmad, IV, 57; Ibn Sa'd, IV, 313).

This narration openly shows how deep a reverence and the degree of presence that the Messenger of Allah had during his *tahajjud* prayer, and how long he would pray for.

In another narration Rabia said:

"I would wait by the door when the Messenger of Allah entered his house, thinking that he might have a need that I could fulfil. I would hear him say constantly: '*Subhanallah, Subhanallah, Subhanallah wa bihamdih*'. Eventually I would be tired and go back or I would be overcome with sleep and lie down and sleep" (Ahmad, IV, 59).

According to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the prophet's wife, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would pray during the night until his feet were swollen (from standing).

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83. According to this hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) first recited Baqara, then from Nisa, then from Al'i Imran. This reading is not in line with the present order of these chapters in the Holy Qur'an of Baqara, Al'i Imran, then Nisa. Exponents of hadith explain the wisdom in this in two ways: The first is that the final order of the chapters had not been finalised at that time. The second is that permission has been given to recite in this order.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates that she once asked the Messenger of Allah:

"O Messenger of Allah! Allah has forgiven both your past and your future mistakes[84], so why do you do this (why do you cause yourself so much difficulty)?"

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) replied:

"Should I not wish to be a grateful slave?" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 48/2; Muslim, Munafiqin, 81).

The following words of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), also describe the prophet's love of worship.

"...I know well that on the Day of Badr, all of us slept except for the Messenger of Allah. He, however, stood under a tree and prayed until the morning, with the tears rolling down his cheeks"[85].

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him), narrates**:**

"Whenever the Messenger of Allah was unable to perform the *tahajjud* prayer due to a sickness of some sort, he would pray twelve rakats of prayer the next day" (Muslim, Musafirin, 140).

Amr ibn Abasa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One day I said:

"O Messenger of Allah. Is there a time that is closer to Allah than the others?"

"Yes, the time when the Lord is closest to His servant is in the middle of the last part of the night. If you have the strength to be one of those who remember Allah at that time, then do so..." (Abu Dawud, Salat, 299/1277).

Abu Uthman an Nahdi (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"I was the guest of Abu Hurairah for seven nights. Abu Hurairah, his wife, and his servant would divide the night up into three parts and each

84. In actual fact, prophets do not knowingly commit sins. Their 'mistakes' are either in abandoning the better option or minor 'slips' called 'zelle'. There are various reasons or wisdoms in this. Almighty Allah does not allow these 'slips' to remain but immediately corrects them.
85. Muslim, Siyam, 204; Ibn Huzayma, *Sahih,* Beirut 1970, II, 52.

would stay up for a part. Each would perform the prayer and then wake the other up (Bukhari, At'ima, 40).

His Fasting

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would fast the obligatory fast during Ramadan, with great eagerness. After that he would continue to fast regularly. He would prefer to fast in particular on Mondays and Thursdays and he would explain the reason as follows:

"Deeds are presented to Allah on Mondays and Thursday. I like for my deeds to be presented to Allah whilst I am fasting" (Tirmidhi, Sawm, 44/747).

"I was born on a Monday and it was on a Monday that revelation began to be revealed to me" (Muslim, Siyam, 198).

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) would also give great importance to fasting on the 13th, 14th, and 15th days of the lunar month, which are called '*Ayyam-i Bidh'*. He would also advise this to his Companions. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"The prophet never neglected to fast on the *Ayyam-i Bidh* in either peace or battle" (Nasai, Sawm, 70).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would fast six days from the month of Shawwal[86], and the fast of Ashura on the 9th and 10th or the 10th and 11th days of Muharram[87].

He said that righteous deeds performed on the first ten days of the month of Dhi al-Hijjah were very precious in the sight of Allah[88] and in particular about the fast on the day of *ashura* he said:

"It is atonement for the sins of an entire past year and for the next year" (Muslim, Siyam 196, 197).

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86. See Musli, Siyam, 204.
87. See Bukhari, Sawm 47, 69, Anbiya 24; Muslim, Siyam, 113-133; Tirmidhi, Sawm, 48; Ahmad, I, 241.
88. See Bukhari, Iydayn 11. In addition see Abu Dawud, Sawm, 61; Tirmidhi, Sawm, 52; Ibn Maja, Siyam, 39.

There was no month in which he did not fast until the day he passed away. In particular he would fast for most of the month of Shaban[89].

Sometimes he would perform *sawm-i wisal* that is he would fast for a few days without breaking his fast, however, he did not allow his Companions to do so[90].

His Hajj and Umrah

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) described the virtues of hajj and umrah as follows:

"Let the one who wishes to perform the hajj make haste. It may be that he falls ill, he loses his mount or another need arises" (Ahmad, I, 214; Ibn Majah, Manasik, 1).

"Umra is an atonement for the (minor) sins of a person performed between two umrahs. And the reward for an accepted hajj is Paradise" (Bukhari, Umra, 1).

"Close the gap between hajj and umrah. These remove poverty and sins just like the bellows clean away the rust of iron, gold and silver" (Tirmidhi, Hajj, 2/810; Ibn Majah, Manasik, 3; Ahmad, III, 446-447).

"Like the spending done for the sake of Allah, Allah rewards the spending done during Hajj seven hundred fold (Ahmad, V, 354-355).

The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would also declare the virtues of sacrificing animals for the sake of Allah and he would do so for himself, his family and for those from his community who were unable to[91].

His charity

The nature of the charity of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was so elevated that it is impossible to describe it. He loved to give more so than receiving. He would give out great amounts, without fear-

89. See Muslim, Siyam, 172-173, 176.
90. See Bukhari, Sawm, 48.
91. See Abu Dawud, Adahi, 3-4/2792; Tirmidhi, Adahi, 20/1521; Ibn Maja, Adahi, 1; Ibn Sa'd, I, 249.

ing poverty in the slightest. He would say that what belonged to him was not what remained after he had given, but what he in fact gave out[92].

He informed us that *sadaqa* (charity) reached Allah before it reached the one in need[93]. For this reason he would immediately give out whatever came to him, and if there was something in his house that he could give away he would not find peace and he would be unable to sleep.

Umm Salamah (may God be pleased with him) narrates:

"One day the Messenger of Allah came to me, his face having changed colour. Thinking that this was due to some pain I asked him:

"O Messenger of Allah. Your face has changed colour, what is the matter?" The prophet replied:

"I am in this state because of the seven dinars that came to us yesterday. It is night time and the dinars are still under my bed (We have not been able to give them away)" (Ahmad, VI, 293; Haysami, X, 238).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) lived in a constant state of altruism. He would give any gifts or charity that came to him to the People of the Bench that is to those needy Muslims who had dedicated themselves to serving the religion of Allah. His mercy embraced all of creation and he was always thinking of the poor and needy.

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her), the daughter of the prophet was the most beloved member of his family. She used to grind wheat with a grinder and carry water in a water-skin which resulted in callouses on her hands and shoulders. Her clothes were always dirty and dusty from sweeping the house. At one time, some war captives were brought to the Messenger of Allah. I said to Fatima:

"Why do you not go to your father and ask for a servant?" Fatima went to her father, but the Messenger of Allah was talking to some people at the

92. See Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 33/2470.
93. See Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* IV, 81. In addition, see Haysami, III, 110, 111; Ali al Muttaqi, VI, 377/16134.

time and so she returned home. The next day the Messenger of Allah went to Fatima and asked her:

"My daughter, what was it that you were in need of?" Fatima was silent and did not reply. I intervened and said:

"Let me explain o Messenger of Allah" and I explained the matter to him. The Messenger of Allah then said:

"O Fatima. Fear Allah. Perform His obligatory commands. Do your family's chores. When you go to bed repeat Subhanallah thirty three times, Alhamdulillah thirty three times, and Allahu Akbar thirty four times. This makes a total of one hundred. This is better for you than a servant".

Fatima said:

"I am pleased with Allah and His Messenger". The Messenger of Allah did not provide her with a servant" (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 19-20/2988. See Bukhari, Humus, 6).

The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) later said:

"By Allah I cannot give you a servant when the People of the Bench are tying rocks to their stomach due to their hunger and I cannot find anything to provide for them. I am going to receive a ransom for the war captives and use the proceeds to spend on the People of the Bench" (Ahmad, I, 106).

Another time when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was digging the trench and carrying earth together with the Muslims, he became very hungry and tied stones to his stomach in order to quell his hunger. Seeing the pain on the face of the Messenger of Allah, Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) invited him to his house in order to offer him what little food he had in his house. However, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was always thinking of his Companions before himself. He thus gathered them all and in a miraculous fashion fed over a thousand Companions with food that would normally have sufficed only a few people[94].

These narrations show us how profound and endless a mercy and compassion he felt for all of the believers.

94. See Bukhari, Maghazi 29, Manaqib 25; Muslim, Ashriba, 141-143; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 39; Waqidi, II, 452.

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) never kept anything beyond what was an essential need. When he could find nothing to give away he would promise to give something when it arrived and in fact even went into debt in order to meet the needs of the poor[95].

On the day he passed away, the Messenger of Allah told Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) to give the six or seven dinars that were under his bed to the poor. A little while later he asked what happened to the dinars. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) told him that she had forgotten to give them away as she was preoccupied with his illness. He then asked her for the dinars and said:

"Muhammad, the prophet of Allah, does not see fit that he should go to his Lord with these still in his possessions, and not having given them away to the needy..."

He then had them given to five needy families from the Ansar. After that he said:

"Now I am at ease..." He then fell into a light sleep. (Ahmad, VI, 104; Haysami, X, 239-240; Ibn Sa'd, II, 237-238).

This was the never-ending charity of the prophet which did not decrease, even on his deathbed...

The *Khushu* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

The inner conditions of worship are just as important as the outer conditions. Just as prayer cannot begin without completing the required conditions of cleanliness and wudu so too without conditions such as sincerity, *khushu*, and presence, which is the preparation of the heart, prayer cannot be begun.

Allah, Most High, says in the Holy Qur'an:

'It is the believers who are successful: those who are humble in their salat…' (Mu'minun, 23:1-2).

95. See Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 33-35/3055; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih,* XIV, 262-264; Haysami, X, 242.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be him) taught his Companions both the inner and outer conditions of the prayer. One of the most important of the inner conditions is '*khushu'* or deep reverence and humility.

Khushu is when the heart softens, becoming tender, delicate and profound in the face of the divine manifestations of greatness and power. This state of the heart is reflected in the limbs of one's body and gives a certain peace, harmony and spirituality to one's actions. *Khushu* comes about as a result of one's connection to Allah.

Abdullah ibn Shihhir (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the Companions, describes the *khushu* of the prophet during prayer as follows:

"One time I went to the Messenger of Allah. He was praying and there was a sound like the boiling of water coming from his chest due to his crying" (Abu Musa, Salat, 156-157/904; Ahmad, IV, 25, 26).

The Messenger of Allah said:

"The prayer is performed in two rakats. After two rakats you sit down for the tashahhud. *You find yourself in deep* khushu *and plead and supplicate to Allah. You are humble and lowered. (When you finish your prayer) you raise your hands to your elevated Lord, the inner palms to your face and begging: "O my Lord! O my Lord!." Whoever does not do this, then his prayer is lacking"* (Tirmidhi, Salat, 166/385).

Another time the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to a person who performed his prayer quickly and without *khushu*:

"Go back and perform your prayer once more, because you did not in fact pray." He then described the prayer to him as follows:

"When you rise to pray, proclaim the takbir *and then begin to read a portion of easy verses from the Qur'an that you have memorised. Then bow down and stay there until all of your limbs have reached a state of calm, then rise and stay calmly upright for a while, then bow down in prostration and stay there for a while, then come up and sit for a while. Apply this to your whole prayer."* (Bukhari, Adhan 95, 122, Ayman 15, Isti'zan 18; Muslim, Salat 45).

He advised another Companion as follows:

"When you rise to pray, pray as if you were a person leaving this world". (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15; Ahmad, V, 412).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) once saw a man playing with his beard while praying. He said to him:

"Look at that man, if his heart was in khushu*, his limbs would be also"* (Ali al-Muttaqi, VIII, 197/22530. See Abdurrazzaq, *Musannaf*, II, 266-267).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would not allow anything to interfere in his state of *khushu* during prayer. One day Abu Jahm (may Allah be pleased with him) brought to the prophet a fine embroidered robe. Allah's Messenger performed his prayer with that robe. When he was finished, he said to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

"*Return this robe to Abu Jahm. The embroidery caught my eye and I was about to lose my presence in the prayer*" (*Muwatta'*, Salat, 67; Bukhari, Salat, 14).

Worship that is performed without *khushu* becomes empty, meaningless and a mere form without spirit.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"A person finishes his prayer and only a tenth, a ninth, an eighth, a seventh, a sixth, a fifth, a fourth, a third or half of its reward is written down for them" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 123-124/796; Ahmad, IV, 321)

Another time the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The worst thief is the one who steals from his prayer". His Companions asked him:

"O Messenger of Allah. How can a person steal from his prayer?" He replied:

"He does not bow down or prostrate properly and when he rises he does not completely straighten his back" (Ahmad, V, 310; Darimi, Salat, 78).

Thus, a prayer that is performed without abiding by the rules, and deprived of *khushu* will decrease in its value, decreasing to as much as a tenth. The angels will record in the book of deeds:

"Such and such decreased the value of their prayer by a fourth, such and such by a half..." (Abdurrazzaq, *Musannaf*, II, 371).

Ubada ibn Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates something he learned from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

"...The first knowledge (that is, state) that will be removed from people is *khushu*. The days are near when you will enter a large mosque and not be able to see a single person praying with *khushu*..." (Tirmidhi, Ilm, 5/2653; Darim, Muqaddima, 29).

Allah, Most High, describes those righteous servants of His who worship in *khushu* as follows:

"…those who give what they have given, their hearts fearful of their return to their Lord, such people are truly racing towards good things, and they are the first to reach them' (Mu'minun, 23:60-61).

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates**:**

"When the above verse was revealed I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

"Are those mentioned in the verse those who commit sins such as adultery, burglary or drinking alcohol?" The prophet replied:

"No, o daughter of Siddiq. Those described in the verse are those who when they pray, fast or give in charity are anxious about whether their worship will be accepted by Allah or not?" (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 23/3175; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 20).

And so the most important purpose of training in tasawwuf is to allow the hearts to attain this state of *khushu*.

The Messenger of Allah's seeking of forgiveness and his supplication

The most important sign of servitude to Allah is *istigfar* (seeking forgiveness) and *dua* (supplication).The one who is occupied with *istigfar* and *dua* is a person who has perceived his own weakness and who lives in a state of being together with Him by constantly remembering his Lord.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"You who have faith! Make sincere *tawba* to Allah…' (Tahrim, 66:8)

'The part of the night they (the people with taqwa) spent asleep was small and they would seek forgiveness before the dawn' (Dhariyat, 51: 17-18).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"O mankind! Make tawba *to Allah and seek forgiveness from Him. Indeed I make* tawba *to Allah and seek His forgiveness 100 times, and even more in a day"* (Ahmad, IV, 261; Nasai, *Kubra,* IX, 168; Compare Muslim, Dhikr, 42).

"Every morning when I go out I seek Allah's forgiveness 100 times" (Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* VI, 57/29445; Nasai, *Kubra,* IX, 167).

This is why the times of the predawn and the dawn are considered amongst the righteous predecessors (*salaf'i salihin*) to be times of seeking forgiveness and supplication and they would show great care at those times"[96].

Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"We would count the Messenger of Allah saying the following prayer 100 times in an assembly:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِى وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

"O Allah. Forgive me and accept my tawba*. You accept* tawba *much and are Most Merciful"* (Abu Dawud, Witr, 26/1516; Tirmidhi, Dawat, 38/3434).

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"I never saw anyone say I seek forgiveness from Allah and I make *tawba* to Him more than the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)" (Nasai, *Kubra,* IX, 171; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih,* III, 207/928).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever continues to seek forgiveness from Allah, Allah Most High will provide for them a way out of every constriction, freedom from every sorrow,

96. Haysami, VII, 47; Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfatu al Ahwazi,* II, 473-474; Ibn Hajar, *Telhisu al Habir,* IV, 206.

and provision from where he never expected." (Abu Dawud, Witr, 26/1518; Ibn Majah, Adab, 57; Ahmad, I, 248; Hakim, IV, 291/7677).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) also described the best form of *istigfar* as follows:

"The master of istigfar and the most superior is for you to say the following:

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّى لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِى وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلٰى عَهْدِكَ
وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبُوءُ لَكَ
بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِى فَاغْفِرْ لِى فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

"O Allah! You are my Lord. None has the right to be worshipped but You. You created me and I am Your servant, and I am faithful to my covenant and my promise as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So I entreat You to forgive my sins, for nobody can forgive sins except You".

The prophet then continued:

"Whoever reads this Master Prayer of Forgiveness (Sayyid al-Istighfar) during the day, believing with all his heart in its reward and virtue, will be of the people of Paradise if he dies before the night falls. And whoever reads it at night, believing with all his heart in its virtue and rewards will be of the people of Paradise, if he dies before the morning" (Bukhari, Dawat, 2, 16; Abu Dawud, Adab, 100-101; Nasai, Istiaza, 57/5519; Tirmidhi, Dawat, 15/3393).

Supplication

Almighty Allah says:

'Call on your Lord humbly and secretly. He does not love those who overstep the limits' (A'raf, 7:55).

'Their sides eschew their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope. And they give of what We have provided for them. No one

knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what they used to do’ (Sajdah, 32:16-17).

‘Say: ‘What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him?’ (Furqan, 25:77).

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Dua is the essence of servitude (to Allah).” (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 1/3371).

“Dua is worship itself.” (Abu Dawud, Witr, 23/1479; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 2/2969).

“There is nothing more precious in the sight of Allah than dua.” (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 1/3370).

“Ask from the virtue of Allah. For Allah Most High likes to be asked.” (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 115/3571).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was in a constant state of supplication. When we look at books that have been compiled about his prayers we see that his blessed heart was always turned to Allah. He had various supplications for whenever he woke up for *tahajjud*, or went to relieve himself, or to take ablutions, to read the call to prayer, to enter the mosque, on leaving the mosque, after salat, on breaking his fast, after eating, on leaving the house in the morning, when going for battle, returning from battle, ascending his mount, stopping over on a journey, buying something new, eating the first fruit or vegetable of the season, when wearing his clothes, arising from an assembly, on reaching the morning, when the night fell, when going to sleep, when waking up in the night, in comfort and in distress... There were so many of these that his Companions had trouble memorising them all[97].

Furthermore, the masters of tasawwuf struggle to be always in the same state of supplication as the prophet Muhammad. They take great care to plead to Allah with these prayers that fell from the blessed lips of the prophet. The prophetic supplications know better the ways that lead to Allah.[98]

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97. See Tirmidhi Dawat, 88/3521.
98. Abdulhamid ibn Muhammad Ali, *az Zahairu al Qudsiyya fiy Ziyarati Hayri al Beriyya,* Beirut 1428, p. 192.

The *dhikr* and Qur'an recitation of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

Almighty Allah has commanded His servants as follows:

'Remember your Lord in yourself humbly and fearfully, without loudness of voice, morning and evening. Do not be one of the unaware.' (A'raf, 7:205).

'You who have faith! Remember Allah much, and glorify Him in the morning and the evening' (Ahzab, 33:41-42).

With his beautiful character and model behaviour and actions, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), a living Qur'an, was always in a state of remembrance of Allah, be it with his glorification or with his contemplation.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah was always in a state of *dhikr*, at every moment" (Muslim, Haydh, 117; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 9/18; Tirmidhi, Dawat, 9/3384).

Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him), the grandson of the prophet once asked his father Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) about the character and *adab* of the prophet which his father described at length. At one point he said:

"The Messenger of Allah neither sat down nor rose without remembering Allah..." (Ibn Sa'd, I, 424).

Even during his most difficult journeys the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was always preoccupied with *dhikrullah*. If during a journey it was not the time of *karahat*[99], he would perform his salat at length, upon his camel. At other times he would climb the hills proclaiming the *takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) and the *tahlil* (*La ilah illallah*) and would glorify Allah when coming back down[100].

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99. *karahat* are the disliked times of prayer, for instance it is discouraged to pray right after the sun has risen, just before noon, when the sun is at its peak, and right before sunset (Translator's note).

100. Bukhari, Jihad, 131-132; Muslim, Dhikr, 44-46; Ahmad, III, 333.

He did not abandon his remembrance of Allah even whilst fighting against the enemy. After describing how to perform the prayer in congregation, Allah says in the Qur'an:

'When you have finished salat remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on your sides. When you are safe again do salat in the normal way. The salat is prescribed for the believers at specific times' (Nisa, 4:103).

In another verse, Almighty Allah commands the believers to rush to remember Allah when the Friday call to prayer is read, and to leave all trade. Immediately after that He describes the duties of the believers after the prayer as follows:

'Then when the salat is finished spread through the earth and seek Allah's bounty and remember Allah much so that hopefully you will be successful.' (Jumu'a, 62:10).

At every opportunity the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would encourage his family and his Companions to perform their night worship and to *dhikr*.

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"One night the Messenger of Allah awoke in fear and said:

*"Subhanallah! Tonight many trials have been sent down and many treasuries have been opened. Awake o owners of the cell (here he is indicating his wives). There are many clothed women in this world who are considered naked in the hereafter." (*Bukhari, Ilm 40, Fitan 6).

Ubayy ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates**:**

"After two thirds of the night had passed the Messenger of Allah would wake and say:

"O people! Remember Allah. The trumpet (sur) that will unsettle the earth is near. It will be followed by the second one. Death has come in all its intensity. Death has come in all its intensity..." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 23/2457).

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates that the Messenger of Allah would wake for the night prayer and say ten times:

اَللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ، سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ ، سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ ، اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ ، لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ

"*Allahu Akbar, Alhamdulillahi Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi, subhan al-malik al-quddus, astaghfirullah, la ilaha illallah*". Then he would say ten times:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّى أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ ضِيقِ الدُّنْيَا وَضِيقِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the constriction and distress of the Day of Judgement" (Abu Dawud, Adab, 101/5085).

Constant dhikr

Almighty Allah presents the Messenger of Allah to us as the most perfect example of remembering Allah much[101]. He was in a state of remembrance of Allah in every circumstance – in fear, in hope, in distress, in ease, whilst resting, whilst working, whilst walking, whilst stopping, at night and during the day. He also advised his Companions and his community to do the same.

Muadh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"I once said to the Messenger of Allah: "O Messenger of Allah. Give me some advice". He replied:

"Have taqwa *of Allah to the best of your ability. Remember Allah near every stone and every tree. Repent for any sins that you commit, openly for those done openly and in secret for those sins done in secret."* (Haysami, X, 74).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) once again advised us to carry out our every task by mentioning His Name:

"...Lock your door and mention the Name of Allah. Put out your lamp and mention the Name of Allah. Cover your water vessels and mention the Name of Allah, even if you have to improvise something across them" (Bukhari, Badu' al-khalq, 11).

101. See Ahzab, 33:21.

The Blessed Companions put this advice into practice with great passion and eagerness and arrived at such a state that, in the words of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him), they were able to hear the glorification of Allah made by the food they ate[102].

Communal dhikr

Even though remembering Allah while alone and in secret is more acceptable, from time to time it is also quite virtuous to make *dhikr* of Allah loudly whilst in a gathering.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"There are a class of Allah's angels that they travel around seeking people of dhikr. *When they find a community performing dhikr of Allah they cry out to each other:*

"Come, here is what you have been looking for. The angels then come and envelop the people of dhikr *with their wings until they reach the heavens..."* (Bukhari, Dawat, 66).

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased him) and Abu Said al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) both bore witness that the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whenever a gathering sits to remember Allah, the angels surround them, divine mercy envelops them, and a tranquillity descends upon them and Allah Most High mentions them in a gathering of His superior slaves (the prophets and the great angels)." (Muslim, Dhikr, 39).

One day the Messenger of Allah approached a group of his Companions who were sitting in a circle. He asked them:

"Why are you sitting here?" They replied:

"We are sitting here to remember Allah and thank Him for bestowing Islam upon us thereby favouring us". The prophet replied:

"Speak the truth in the name of Allah. Did you really sit here to remember Allah?" They replied:

102. See Bukhari, Manaqib, 25.

"Yes, by Allah this is why we have gathered here".

Allah's Messenger then said:

"I did not make you swear by Allah because I did not believe you. But Gabriel came to me and told me that Allah, Most High, informed His angels that He was proud of you and that is why I said this." (Muslim, Dhikr, 40; Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Musannaf,* VI, 59; Compare Ahmad, III, 265).

On another day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) described the virtues of assemblies of *dhikr*:

"When you stop by the gardens of Paradise make sure you benefit from them properly." His Companions asked him:

"What do you mean by the gardens of Paradise o Messenger of Allah?" He replied:

"The assemblies of dhikr.*"* (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 82/3510).

Shaddad ibn Aws (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

One time I was with Allah's Messenger and he asked us:

"Is there any foreigner amongst you?" By foreigner he meant a person from the people of the Book.

We replied:

"No, there is not o Messenger of Allah". He then ordered us to close the doors and said:

"Raise your hands and say: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ *, La ilaha illallah*"

We raised our hands and made *dhikr* like that for a period.

After that Allah's Messenger put his hands down and prayed as follows:

"Alhamdulillah. O Allah. You sent me with this 'statement. You commanded me to utter it and act as it requires. You promised me Paradise in reward for it. And You never turn back on Your promise".

Later Allah's Messenger said to his Companions:

"Good news for you. Indeed Allah has forgiven you." (Ahmad, IV, 124).

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) once went to Abdullah ibn Rawaha (may Allah be pleased with him). He was talking with his friends and performing *dhikr* with them. The Messenger of Allah said:

“You are such select people that Almighty Allah ordered me to be with you and to be patient with you in the face of difficulties”.

He then recited the following verse:

‘Restrain yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. Do not turn your eyes from them, desiring the attractions of this world. And do not obey someone whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and who follows his own whims and desires and whose life has transgressed all bounds’ (Kahf, 18:28).

Then the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) continued:

“Know that if a number of people gather to remember Allah, then the same number of angels sit next to them. If they glorify Allah, the angels glorify Allah; if they praise Allah, the angels also praise Allah; if they declare the takbir, the angels also declare the takbir. Then the angels enter the presence of Allah and even though Allah knows about the event more than they do, they tell Him:

“O Lord. Your servants glorified You and we too glorified You; they declared the takbir and we too declared the takbir; they praised You and we too praised You”.

Almighty Allah says:

“O my angels, Bear witness that I have forgiven them”. The angels say:

“O Lord. There are such and such people amongst them who have made many mistakes and who have come with other intentions”.

Almighty Allah will say:

“They are such a gathering that those who sit with them cannot be bad.” (Haysami, X, 76; Abu Nuaym, *Hilyah,* V, 118).

In that case let us stop and think: Where are we in this *dhikr*? How close does our *dhikr* come to that of Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be

upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with him)? Let us never forget that *dhikr* for the heart is like water to the fish. If the fish is removed from the water what will become of it?

Ibn Qayyim al Jawzi has said:

"*Dhikr* gives the *dhakir* (the one who performs *dhikr*) such strength that a person can easily perform tasks that he never thought possible before"[103].

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

One of the greatest forms of *dhikr* is recitation of the Holy Qur'an. **Hakim al-Tirmidhi** has said:

"To remember Allah Most High with His own words is better than remembering Him with our own"[104].

Sufyan Sawri has said:

"The Holy Qur'an has a great light which is worthy of the glory of Allah, who speaks it"[105].

The believer will benefit from the Qur'an even if he does not understand the meaning. One of the great scholars has said:

"A person takes some medicine, but they do not know what they are taking and yet the medicine takes effect. The Holy Qur'an also impacts in this way. Every letter of the Qur'an is like a mountain that falls upon the body of the human being (his existence and his self) and it eliminates that body and wipes away all traces of human defects (that is, it elevates him spiritually). The light of the Qur'an unites with the light of the believer's heart and the human body [physical nature] is eliminated (no claim to existence and self will remain)"[106].

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would recite the Qur'an properly, reflect much on its meanings and immediately abide by its commands. He would recite it with his heart, feeling it and experienc-

103. *al-Wabilu al-Sayyib p* 61. Fayda.
104. Muhammad Parsa, *The talks of Muhammad Bahauddin, p*. 59.
105. Muhammad Parsa, *ibid,* p. 59.
106. Muhammad Parsa, *ibid, p*. 60.

ing it. When reading, if he came to a verse about glorification of Allah, he would absolve Allah of any faults by saying "*Subhanallah*" or such similar statements. When he came to verses about supplication he would supplicate to Allah. Whenever he read a verse about seeking refuge in Allah he would immediately seek refuge in Allah[107]. Sometimes he would repeat a single verse over and over again until the morning[108].

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) would regularly read the Qur'an every day. He would divide the Qur'an up into seven parts and complete an entire reading (*hatim*) in one week. His Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) would do the same[109].

The recitation of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was very clear, and he would read each letter with *tartil*, that is with care and reflection. He would also recite in accordance with the rules of *tajweed*[110].

When we look at the life of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), we see that he read the Qur'an at every opportunity. When teaching people about Islam and talking with his Companions he would recite from the Qur'an. When explaining a particular matter he would read any related verses and he would recite at length from the Qur'an during his night worship.

He would read the Qur'an during a journey. Suraqa (may Allah be pleased with him), who followed the Messenger as he was migrating from Mecca said that he was so close that he could hear the recitation of the prophet[111].

The prophet would give more importance to the Qur'an in the month of Ramadan in particular. He would recite the entire Qur'an every night of this month with his friend Gabriel. In the Ramadan before his demise, they completed this entire recitation twice[112].The Messenger of Allah would also carry out this recitation with some of his Companions[113].

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107. See Muslim, Musafirin, 203; Nasai, Qiyamu al layl, 25.
108. See Nasai, Iftitah, 79; Ahmad, V, 156.
109. See Muslim, Musafirin, 142; Ahmad, IV, 9; Ibn Maja, Salat, 178.
110. See Tirmidhi, Fadail al Qur'an, 23.
111. See Bukhari, Manaqibu al Ansar, 45; Ahmad, IV, 176; Ibn Hisham, II, 103; Hakim, III, 7.
112. See Bukhari, Bad'u al Khalq 6, Fadail al Qur'an 7, Sawm 7; Muslim, Fadail 50.
113. See Ahmad, I, 405; Tabari I, 28; *Mukaddimetan,* pub. A. Jeffery, p. 74, 227; Tahir al Jazairi, *at Tibyan* p. 26.

Just as the Messenger of Allah loved to read the Qur'an, he also received a certain pleasure from listening to it being recited by others.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

One day the Messenger of Allah said to me:

"Would you recite the Qur'an to me?" I replied:

"O Messenger of Allah. How can I recite the Qur'an to you when it has been revealed to you?"

Allah's Messenger responded:

"I love to listen to the Qur'an from others".

I then began to recite from the chapter Nisa. When I came to the 41st verse which was:

'How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you as a witness against them?' ((Nisa, 4:41)

He said:

"That is enough for now".

I looked to see that there were tears falling from his blessed eyes (Bukhari, Tafsir, 4/9; Muslim, Musafirin, 247).

The Companions were also occupied with the Qur'an in times of both peace and battle. The following words of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) are a beautiful proof of this:

"I know well the sound of the soft-hearted Ansari people when they enter (their homes) by night reciting the Qur'an. Even if I have not seen where they have stopped over during the day (during a battle), I can easily identify where they are by the sounds of their recitation of the Qur'an by night... (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38).

The contemplation of the Messenger of Allah

Even before the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was given the duty of prophethood he liked silence and contemplation (*tafakkur*). When the time of his prophethood was near he became even more eager

for privacy and seclusion. He would go to the cave of Hira, about 5km out of Mecca, and spend days there. His worship during these retreats would be to contemplate, to take lessons from the realms of the heavens and the earth, like his forefather Ibrahim, and to watch the Ka'bah[114]. In this way Almighty Allah prepared him for the sacred duty that was to follow.

During that time he would ponder deeply on the universe and its Creator and in his later life he would always be in a state of contemplation.

Hind ibn Abi Hale (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates**:**

"...The prophet would always look straight ahead. His glance down lasted longer than his glance up. He looked at everything with the aim of taking a lesson... He was in a constant state of sorrow and contemplation. Ease was not an issue for him. He did not speak unless there was a need. He preferred to remain silent..." (Tabarani, *Kabir,* XXII, 155; Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* III, 24; Ibn Sa'd, I, 422-423).

The prophet himself said:

"My Lord commanded that my silence be contemplation" (Jazari, *Jamiu al-Usul,* XI, 687/9317; Qudai, *Shihab,* no: 1159).

Ata, from the Tabieen, narrates the following scene which describes the gentleness of the heart of the Messenger and his degree of *tafakkur*:

I once asked **Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):**

"Can you tell me the most amazing state you saw of the Messenger of Allah?" She replied:

"Which of his states was not amazing?" She then continued:

"One night after coming to me the Messenger of Allah said:

"O Aisha! If you allow me I would like to spend this night worshipping my Lord".

I responded:

"By Allah, I love to be with you. However I love that which pleases you more".

114. Badraddin al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari,* I, 61; XXIV, 128, Beyrut.

He then rose, took his ablutions and stood to pray. He began to cry... He wept so much that his dress, his blessed beard and the place where he prostrated were saturated. While he was in that state, Bilal came to call him for the dawn prayer. When he saw the prophet crying he said:

"O Messenger of Allah. Why do you weep when Allah, Most High, has forgiven you your past and future sins?"

The Messenger of Allah replied:

"Shall I not be a grateful slave? By Allah this night some verses were revealed to me that woe be to those who do not read and reflect upon them".

He then recited the following verses:

'In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are Signs for people with intelligence: those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: 'Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire' (Al'i Imran, 3:190-191) (Ibn Hibban, *Sahih,* II, 386; Alusi, *Ruh al-Maani,* IV, 157).

On the night that these verses were revealed the Messenger of Allah cried until the morning with tears of pearl that would have make the stars feel envious. In the same way the tears of the believers when they contemplate on the manifestations of Divine power and majesty will be, by the grace of Allah, the adornment of these fleeting nights, and the light of the dark graves, and by the will of Allah drops of dew in the gardens of Paradise.

Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) sent his 10 year old son to his aunt Maymuna, the wife of the prophet, to learn about the tahajjud prayer of the prophet. **Ibn Abbas** (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the rest of the story:

"At night I stayed in the room of my aunt Maymuna. The Messenger of Allah chatted with his family for a short time and then retreated to rest. When it was the last third of the night he woke up, and for a short period watched and reflected upon the heavens. He then recited the 190th verse of the chapter Al'i Imran..." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 3/17, 18; Tawheed, 27).

The following is from another narration:

"…After a half of the night had passed or just before or just after, the Messenger of Allah awoke. He sat and wiped away the sleep from his face with his hands. He then recited the last ten verses of Al'i Imran. He then rose and turned to his water urn to take his ablution..." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 3/19; Ahmad, I, 242).

The fact that the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) recited these verses regarding *tafakkur* when he rose for the tahajjud prayer indicates that the most fruitful time for contemplation is the pre-dawn.

Allah's Messenger and his Companions would read the Qur'an and ponder on its wisdom and the details of its meanings[115]. Sometimes he would focus on one verse until the morning and supplicate and entreat Allah[116].

Abu Said al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him):

"One time one Companion heard another Companion recite the chapter *Ikhlas* until the morning. When it was morning he went to the Messenger of Allah and told him. It was as if he considered this short verse too little to be read the entire night. The prophet however said:

"I swear by the Being who holds my soul in His hand of power that this chapter is equal to one third of the Qur'an" (Bukhari, Ayman, 3. Cf Bukhari, Adhan 106, Tawheed 1).

Contemplation of death (Tafakkur al-mawt)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) never forgot the fleeting nature of this world. He said:

"This world in relation to the hereafter is like as if one of you dipped his finger into the ocean. Let him look and see how much water is left on his finger." (Muslim, Jannah, 55).

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

115. See Bukhari, Tafsir, 4/9; Muslim, Iman 346, Musafirin 203, 247, Dhikr 38; Nasai, Qiyamu al layl, 25; *Muwatta',* Qur'an, 4, 11; Haysami, VII, 165; Qurtubi, *Tafsir,* I, 40.
116. Nasai, Iftitah, 79; Ahmad, V, 156.

One time the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had lied down to sleep on a straw mat. When he woke, the straw had made marks on the side of his blessed body. We said:

“O Messenger of Allah. Let us get you a mattress” The prophet replied:

“What have I to do with this world? I am like a traveller who stops to take shade under a tree and then remounts his horse and moves on.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 44/2377).

Bara (may Allah be pleased with ra) narrates:

“We were once with the Messenger of Allah at a funeral service. The Messenger of Allah sat by the side of the grave and began to weep so much so that the earth became wet from his tears. He then said:

“O my brothers, Prepare well for this death (that will befall us all.)” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 19).

Another time, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged his community to contemplate upon death saying:

“Make much remembrance of death. Doing so will cleanse a person of their sins, and make one abstain from the world. If you ponder on death when you are wealthy, you will be protected from the dangers of wealth. If you ponder on death when you are poor, you will be content with your life” (Suyuti, *Jamiu al-Saghir,* I, 47).

“Remember death and remember the rotting of the corpse and the bones! The one who desires the afterlife will abandon the embellishments of this world.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 24).

“…Allah loves the one who remembers death often (Haysami, X, 325).

One time a Companion asked the Messenger of Allah:

“Who is the most intelligent of the believers?”

The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied:

“The one who remembers death the most and prepares for what is to come after. These are the truly intelligent people” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 31).

This is why by assigning a portion of the day to reflecting upon death, the masters of tasawwuf gain a certain spiritual vitality. The vigour and enthusiasm they receive from this contemplation cautions them from wrong and futile tasks, and encourages them to perform beneficial and righteous deeds.

The best means for a person to remember death is visiting the graves. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"I forbade you to visit the graves. But now you may visit them because visiting the graves reminds one of the hereafter." (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 60; Muslim, Janaiz, 106).

Allah's Messenger would frequently visit his Companions in the cemetery of Baqi and the graves of the martyrs of Uhud. According to the words of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the prophet would go to the Baqi cemetery during the last part of the nights that he was with her, and greet and pray for those there[117].

In fact one night the angel Gabriel came to the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said:

"Your Lord commands you to go the people of Baqi and ask for them to be forgiven". The prophet immediately abided by this command and went to visit the cemetery of Baqi. (Muslim, Janaiz, 103).

Abdullah ibn Abi Farwa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"The prophet went to visit the martyrs at Uhud and said:

"O Allah. Your servant and Your prophet bears witness that these are true martyrs. Whoever visits these martyrs and greets them they too will respond to their greeting until the end of time." (Hakim, III, 31/4320).

Imam Sha'bi, one of the great Tabi'een said:

"Whenever one of his close friends from the Ansar passed away, he would visit their grave often and recite Qur'an"[118].

117. See Muslim, Janaiz, 102.
118. Abu Bakr ibn Hallal, *al Kirae inda al Kubur,* Beirut 1424, p. 89, no: 7.

We must make special mention that constancy and continuity were the essence of the prophet's worship. He loved those acts of worship that were done consistently however few they may have been:

"The most beloved of deeds to Allah, Most High, are those that are done consistently even though they may be little." (Muslim, Musafirin, 218; Ahmad, VI, 61).

The worship of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) brought harmony to every part of his life. When we look at his acts of worship we see that it was as if he had done nothing else in his life, as if he was only occupied with worship. Moreover, when we look at his serving others, we can get the impression that he did not find time to worship. However just as the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) carried out his worldly service in the most perfect way, so too did he perform his worship in the best way.

He taught the religion of Allah to people in the face of great difficulties, he explained with his words and his actions the parts of the revelation that needed explanation, he continued to worship day and night with the greatest care, he spent time with his family, he was sympathetic to the poor and needy, he was the most perfect guide for his community, he established a powerful and sound state, he invited kings to Islam by sending them envoys, he accepted envoys and was hospitable to them, he managed and dispatched armies, he struggled selflessly to lift the obstacles that lay in the way of spreading the religion of Allah...

That is, Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) carried out his own personal daily duties without fault, weighty in themselves and which none else could have succeeded at, and also worshipped and served Allah in a better way than those who retreat to the hills to devote themselves to Allah.

As a result of this he was able to display the most praiseworthy of character with traits such as mercy, kindness, forgiveness, clemency, humility, generosity and serving others. The examples of the prophet's beautiful character are endless[119].

119. For details on this matter refer to my book *Civilisation of Virtues*.

The *zuhd* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

The Messenger of Allah had perceived, to the greatest degree, the fleeting nature of this world, and that the true life was that of the hereafter. Whether it was in the building of the Masjid an-Nabi, or at other difficult and distressing times such as the digging of the trench and battle, or in times of happiness such as the conquest of Mecca and the Greater Hajj, he sought refuge in Allah with the same words:

"O Allah! The real life is only the life of the hereafter"[120].

That is, at every moment and in every situation, he stayed away from the pleasures and delights of this world and was always struggling to build his hereafter.

Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One time I was with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He took me by the hand and said:

"O Abu Dharr! If the mountain of Uhud were made of gold and silver, I would spend all of it in the way of Allah and would not want even one qirat[121]*of it with me on the day I die"*.

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah. You would not keep one *qirat* or one *kantar*?" He replied:

"O Abu Dharr. I am reducing it and you are making it more. I want the hereafter and you ask me about the world. I would not leave one qirat, one qirat, one qirat" (Haysami, X, 239).

Abu Muwayhiba (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One day the Messenger of Allah said to me:

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120. See Bukhari, Jihad, 33, 110, Manaqabu al Ansar 9, Maghazi 29, Riqaq 1; Muslim, Jihad 126, 129; Tirmidhi, Manaqib 55; Ibn Maja, Masajid 3; Waqidi, II, 824.
121. **Qirat:** this was a measurement which came to the weight of five barley which corresponded to approximately 0.2125 grams.

"I have been commanded to seek forgiveness for the deceased in the Baqi cemetery. Come with me".

I went with him in the middle of the night. He stood by those lying in their graves and said:

"Salamu alaykum, o people of the graves! Let the state that you are in please you more than that of those who are still living. Dissensions come like waves of darkest night, the one following hard upon the other, each more worse than the last".

The Messenger of Allah then turned to me and said:

"O Abu Muwayhiba! Indeed I have been given the choice between being given the key to the treasures of this world and staying here forever, or going to Paradise. I have been left free to choose between these or returning to my Lord".

I immediately said:

"May my mother and father be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah. Could you not have chosen the keys to the treasures of this world and remaining here and then entering Paradise?"

The prophet replied:

"No, by Allah o Abu Muwayhiba. I chose to return to my Lord".

He then sought forgiveness for the believers in the Baqi cemetery and went back home. After that the illness and pain that would lead to his demise began. (Darimi, Muqaddimah, 14; Ahmad, III, 489, 488; Hakim, III, 57/4383).

This is because the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) always preferred the hereafter; he did not give any importance to worldly property or wealth. He saw wealth and property as being capital for the hereafter and to spend in the way of Allah.

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"Some goods came to the prophet from Bahrain. Allah's Messenger ordered me:

"Take them to the masjid and stack them up".

The amount of these goods was the most that had ever been brought to the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) until that time. The prophet went to pray and did not even glance at the goods. When his prayer was finished he came and sat next to them. He gave out from those goods to whomever he saw... He left there having given out everything until there was not even a single dirham left" (Bukhari, Salat 42, Jizya 4, Jihad 172).

This is because he perceived this world, in comparison to the hereafter, to be a stopover on a traveller's journey; the blessed house of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was also very humble. There was practically no furniture and he used to rest upon a straw mat.

One time when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) saw the marks on the body of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) from sleeping on this mat he began to weep and the Messenger of Allah asked him:

"Why are you weeping?"

He replied:

"O Messenger of Allah. We all know how and where the Chosroes and Caesar sleep. But you are the Messenger of Allah!"

The prophet replied:

"Are you not content that they have the world but the hereafter is yours" (Muslim, Talaq, 31).

After this event Allah Most High revealed the following verse describing Paradise:

"And wherever you have a look therein, you will see unimaginable delight and a great kingdom" (Insan, 76:20) (Suyuti, Lubab al-Nuqul, Beirut 1426, p 252).

The Messenger of Allah's house was also very small. Hasan Basri, who was the son of the maidservant of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), spent his childhood in the blessed house of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and said that when he was small he could touch the roof of his room[122].

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122. Ibn Sa'd, VII, 161; Suhayli, I, 248.

One of the great leaders of the Tabi'een, Said ibn Musayyab said:

"By Allah I would have so much wanted that these rooms not be destroyed and remain as they are. In this way the new generations and those who visit these places could see with how little the Messenger of Allah was content with and how he did not compete to increase his wealth nor to boast about it" (Ibn Sa'd, I, 499-500).

The items used by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and the clothes he wore were also just enough for him to get by with. He did not keep anything with him that was beyond his need, and would immediately give it away.

Qayla bint Mahrama (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"When I saw the Messenger of Allah he was wearing a garment made of two pieces of material which looked like sheets, It had been dyed with saffron and the colour had begun to fade" (Tirmidhi, Adab, 50).

According to a statement by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), on his demise, the prophet was wearing a garment made of two pieces, one of which was patched and the other which was very harsh (Muslim, Libas, 35; Tirmidhi, Libas, 10).

In terms of eating and drinking also the Messenger of Allah was very abstaining. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) once said to her sister's son Urwa:

"We would see one crescent, then the next, and then another, that is we would see three crescents in two months, and yet there would be no fire lit (to cook a meal) in the house of the Messenger of Allah". He said:

"My dear aunt! How did you get by then?" Aisha replied:

"With two black (things), that is dates and water. However the Messenger of Allah had some neighbours from the Ansar who had some milk producing animals. From time to time they would bring some milk from these animals to the Messenger of Allah and we would drink that" (Bukhari, Hiba 1, Riqaq 17; Muslim, Zuhd 28).

Allah's Messenger also had his family live a life of abstinence. Sawban (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"Whenever the Messenger of Allah set out on a journey the last thing he would do was to give his farewells to his daughter Fatima. When he returned the first person he would stop by to see was also Fatima. One time the Messenger of Allah was again returning from a journey. Fatima had hung a curtain over her door and had also given her sons Hasan and Hussain two bangles of silver. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) came to Fatima's house but he did not enter. Fatima realised that the reason why he did not enter was because of what he saw. She immediately removed the (decorative) curtain and the bangles from the wrists of her children...Hasan and Hussain went to the Messenger of Allah weeping. Allah's Messenger gave their bangles to me and said:

"O Sawban! Take these bangles to such and such family. Undoubtedly these grandsons of mine are from my ahl al-bayt. *I do not want them to consume the beautiful things that Allah will bestow on them in Paradise. O Sawban. Purchase for Fatima a necklace made of bone and two bangles of bone for my grandsons"* (Abu Dawud, Tarajjul, 21/4213).

This is how humble the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) raised his children. This was Fatima, the mother of the *ahl al-bayt* and the mother of those in the Golden Chain that is Abdulqadir Gaylani, Shah Naqshiband, Ahmad Rufai and many other *awliya*, *asfiya*, *abrar* and *muqarrabin*. She would also be, with the life of purity that she led, the model for all of the women in our community.

The *zuhd* of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

The Messenger of Allah would constantly remind his Companions of the hereafter and advise them to prepare for it. Hanzala (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the scribes of the revelation, narrates:

One day Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) saw me (crying) and asked:

"What is the matter o Hanzala?"

I replied in great sorrow and anxiety:

"Hanzala has become a hypocrite".

"Subhanallah! What are you saying?" he said. I responded:

"When we are with the Messenger of Allah we are in such a state that when he reminds us and advises us about Paradise and Hell it is as if we can see Allah Almighty and Paradise and Hell with our own eyes. But when we leave his presence and delve into our worldly affairs and our wives and children, we lose most of what we felt and forget the advice of our prophet".

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) said:

"By Allah, this happens to me too".

Then they both rose and went to the Messenger of Allah and told him the situation. The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to them:

"I swear by Allah who holds my life in His Hand of Power that if you were able to maintain the state you are in when you are with me or be in a constant state of remembrance, then the angels would come and shake your hands and congratulate you while you were in your beds or walking (that is day and night)".

(He then repeated three times):

"O Hanzala! Sometimes like this and sometimes like that" (Muslim, Tawbah, 12-13)[123].

As can be understood by this narration the believer should strive to remember his Lord always and to protect himself from heedlessness to the best of his ability.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"One time we complained to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

"O Messenger of Allah. What is wrong with us that whenever we are with you, our hearts soften, we abstain from the world, and we become people of the hereafter. But when we leave you, and mix with our families and smell (the scent of) our children our state changes. We cannot believe the state we enter and how we can change so much".

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123. In other narrations, Hanzala went to Abu Bakr, weeping and complaining about his state (See Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 59/2514; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 28; Ahmad, IV, 178).

The prophet replied:

"If when you part from me you were able to maintain the state you are in while with me, the angels would visit you in your homes..." (Tirmidhi, Jannah, 2/2526).

Another piece of advice that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) gave to his community in order to make it easy for them to live in a climate of *zuhd* is as follows:

"Look at the living conditions of those worse off than you and do not look at those better off than you. This is a more befitting act for you in order that you do not belittle the favours that Allah has bestowed upon you" (Muslim, Zuhd, 9).

"...Whoever looks at those who are above them in religious matters and follows them and looks at those who are worse off than them in worldly matters and praises Allah for the bounties He has given him, Allah will write him down as being grateful and patient..." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 58/2512).

The lifestyle of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) teaches us this:

A Muslim should earn his worldly livelihood, spend of it as is enough for him without being extravagant, and give out what is left after his needs have been met, thus striving to gain the pleasure of Allah. All of creation should benefit from his hand, his tongue and his heart.

It is a good thing for the Muslims to be wealthy as long as they have the above realisation. To have great wealth and property is not inconsistent with *zuhd* and *taqwa* as long as the heart does not become attached to this wealth and one does not waste it. Likewise a small amount of wealth whose love has entered the heart and which has become one's idol is incompatible with *zuhd* and *taqwa*.

The *taqwa* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

***Taqwa* is:**

– To protect oneself from everything that distances one from Allah,

– To dull the desires of one's *nafs* and to develop one's spiritual potential,

– To apply the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah with meticulous care to every aspect of one's life,

– To train one's inner world, and to carry out the religious rulings, interactions with others, and worship with great love, striving, sacrifice and passion.

– To be with Almighty Allah in one's heart, and to have manifest in one's heart beautiful traits such as kindness, compassion, generosity and forgiveness.

One can only attain these beautiful traits by loving Allah, Most High, as He is worthy of being loved and having a strong fear of losing His love or pleasure.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"...The noblest among you in Allah's sight is the one with the most *taqwa*... (Hujurat, 49:13).

"...**Allah is the Protector of those who have *taqwa*"** (Jathiyya, 45:19).

"...(O believers) Take provision; but the best provision is *taqwa* of Allah. So have *taqwa* of Me, people of intelligence!" (Baqara, 2:197).

It is reported in a hadith:

"Fear of Allah is the beginning of all wisdom; and being wary of things which may lead to sin (wara') is the master of all deeds" (Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 387).

"In the sight of Allah, the most pleasing of His servants is the one who has taqwa and does not make himself known (for it)" (Hakim, III, 303. See Ibn Majah, Fitan, 16).

"Those who are closest to me are those who, whoever and wherever they are, they are the muttaqi, *who have* taqwa *of Allah"* (Ahmad, V, 235; Haysami, IX, 22).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to pray often:

"O Allah! I ask You for guidance, taqwa, chastity and wealth of the soul" (Muslim, Dhikr, 72).

It was also very rare for him to leave an assembly without having made the following prayer:

"O Allah! Give us a fear of You that will come between us and our sins and stop us from committing them" (Tirmidhi, Deawat, 79)

One time the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made the following statement:

"I see what you do not see and I hear what you do not hear. The heavens are splitting. This is its right for there is no empty space of four fingers width where there is not an angel who bows down his forehead to Allah in prostration. By Allah if you knew what I know you would laugh little and weep much. You would not be able to occupy yourselves with your wives and you would take to the streets and ask for help for Allah with loud voices".

Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) who narrated this hadith said out of fear of Allah:

"How much I would have wished to be a piece of chopped wood." (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 9/2312).

Due to his fear of Allah, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would even treat his enemies with great sensitivity and would flee from showing even the slightest amount of injustice. For this reason he would more often than not choose the path of forgiveness. The following event is a good example of this:

Suhayl ibn Amr, was the orator of the Quraysh. At a time when speech had great influence, he would constantly speak out against Islam and provoke the people. This man was captured during the Battle of Badr. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"O Messenger of Allah! Allow me to rip out Suhayl's front teeth so that his tongue hangs out. Then he can no longer speak against you or Islam anywhere at any time".

However Allah's Messenger responded:

"Leave him be o Umar! I cannot harm him in this way. If I were to do such a thing Allah, Most High, would do the same to me, even though I am a prophet. Do not be hasty. The day may come when he will make a speech that will please you and make you praise him (Ibn Hisham, II, 293).

In truth, this miracle of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) came true and this man became Muslim during the conquest of Mecca. Upon the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), when there were movements which turning away from the religion, at a tumultuous time when Mecca was being rocked, he gave a sermon which calmed the people and saved them from the great loss of losing their faith. When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) heard these words of Suhayl he remembered the words of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and, with eyes filled tears, he said:

"O Messenger of Allah! I bear witness once more that you are the Messenger of Allah"[124]**.**

One time the prophet's eyes filled with tears due to his fear of Allah and he said:

"My fear of Allah makes me weep for He has sent me upon a path of righteousness which is finer and sharper than a sword; if I deviate from it in the slightest, I will be ruined" (Abu Nuaym, *Dalail*, I, 237).

In fact according to a narration by **Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him)** the Messenger of Allah (said that) when a particular person heard the following verse being recited '**With Us there are shackles and a Blazing Fire'**[125]**,** that a person fell down and fainted (Ali al-Muttaqi, VII, 206/18644).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) feared having to be taken account on the Day of Judgement that he even abandoned many lawful things from his daily life.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"A glass was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In it was milk and honey. Allah's Messenger said:

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124. Ibn Hisham, IV 346; Waqidi, I, 107; Balazuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 303-304; Ibn Abdi al-Barr, *Istiab,* II, 669-671; Hakim, III, 318/5228.
125. Muzzammil, 73:12.

"Two bounties within one drink and two katik[126] *within one drink. I do not need this. However I do not believe that it is unlawful. Only I fear that on the Day of Judgement Almighty Allah will take me to account for any extravagance in this world. I am humble for the sake of Allah. Whoever is humble for the sake of Allah, Allah will elevate him, and whoever is arrogant Allah will degrade him. Whoever is frugal Allah will make him wealthy, and whoever remembers death much, Allah Most High will love him"* (Haysami, X, 325).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to give the following advice:

"A servant cannot reach the degree of a muttaqi *without distancing himself, out of fear of committing a sin, from certain things that are not objectionable"* (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 19/2451; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 24).

"If a person swears an oath about a certain thing and then sees something which is more befitting of taqwa*, let him break his oath and do the thing which is more in accord with* taqwa*"* (Muslim, Ayman, 15).

In short, a believer should carry out his every act with the notion: "Is this act of mine in accordance with the pleasure of Allah or will it draw his wrath (upon me)?"

Above all else he should strive to possess the fear of Allah and *taqwa*.

It has been experienced over and over again that to try to learn other knowledge without first possessing knowledge of *taqwa* itself has dangerous consequences.

Let us add lastly that it is not possible for us to completely explain the worship, *dhikr* and *taqwa* of the Messenger of Allah nor it is possible to describe the depth and beauty within them.

We have only tried to give a few examples. When reading about these examples let us never forget the following words of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him):

"Whenever you hear a hadith, a word or a situation narrated to you, know that Allah's Messenger is much more superior and beyond what you

126. A *katik* is a type of food eaten with bread (Translator's note).

hear in terms of guidance, salah (goodness and virtue) and taqwa” (Ahmad, I, 122).

Salawat u Sharif[127] - The heart’s bond with the prophet

Almighty Allah has said:

‘Allah and His angels call down blessings on the Prophet. You who have faith! Call down blessings on him and ask for complete peace and safety for him’ (Ahzab, 33:56).

Almighty Allah and the angels, the number of which nobody knows but Himself are constantly sending blessings upon the prophet. In that case, we too should remember the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) at every moment of our lives, submit to him wholly and invoke much peace and blessings upon him.

Ubayy ibn Ka’b (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

I once asked the Messenger of Allah:

“O Messenger of Allah. I invoke a great number of blessings upon you. How much should I do this?” He replied:

“*As much as you wish”*.

I asked:

“If I allocate a fourth of my prayer for invoking blessings upon you, is that appropriate?”

He replied:

“Allocate as much as you wish. But if you can do more than that would be better for you”.

“In that case I will allocate half of my prayer” I said.

He said:

127. *Salawat u sharifa* or *salat u salam* is to recite or invoke salutations and blessings upon the prophet Muhammad (saw) (Translator’s note)

"Do as much as you wish. But if you can do more than that would be better for you".

I asked once more:

"Would two-thirds be enough?"

"As much as you wish. But if you increase it, it will be better for you".

"In that case how would it be if I invoke peace and blessings upon you for my entire prayer?"

He replied:

"In that case, Allah, Most High, will bestow upon you all of your desires in both this world and the next and He will forgive you your sins" (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 23/2457; Hakim, II, 457/3578; Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* III, 85/1418; Abdurrazzaq, II, 214).

Salat u salam is so important that the Messenger of Allah himself invoked peace and blessings upon the rank of prophethood. He did this in order to comply with the command of Allah and to be an example to his community[128].

When a believer invokes peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), he responds with an even better response[129]. This is enough of a reward for the believer, for the prayer of the prophet is always acceptable in the sight of Allah and never is it rejected.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)said:

"When a person sends peace and blessings upon me, Allah Most High returns my spirit to me so that I can return his salam" (Abu Dawud, Manasiq, 96).

"I hear the one who sends blessings upon me by my graveand the blessings of the one who sends them to me from afar, reach me" (Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* II, 215).

It is a very virtuous act of worship to be occupied with invoking peace and blessings upon the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on Fridays in particular. **Abu Darda** (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

One day the Messenger of Allah said:

128. See Bukhari, Isti'zan, 28; Abu Dawud, Salat, 18/465; Tirmidhi, Salat, 117/314; Ibn Majah, Masajid, 13.
129. See Nisa, 4:86.

"Invoke much salawat *upon me on Fridays. That day is a day when the angels are present and witnessing*[130]*. Whoever sends blessings upon me on that day, will have them presented to me. This will continue until he stops invoking blessings".*

I asked:

"Even after you pass away?" The prophet replied:

"Yes even after I pass away. Allah, Most High, has forbidden the earth to eat up the bodies of the prophets. Allah's Prophet is alive and is always provided for" (Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 65. See Abu Dawud, Salat 201/1047, Witr 26).

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) has said:

"Whoever invokes blessings upon the prophet one hundred times on a Friday will arrive on the place of gathering on the Day of Judgement with a beautiful and radiant face. People will look at him admiringly asking each other: "I wonder what deed it was that this individual performed?" (Bayhaqi, *Shuabu al-Iman,* III, 212).

Invoking blessings and peace upon the prophet is a sign of the degree of love felt for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). This results in closeness to him. It is said in a hadith:

"The one closest to me on the Day of Judgement is the one who invoked much peace and blessings upon me" (Tirmidhi, Witr, 21/484).

Allah, Most High, is pleased with those who recite salutations and blessings, and bestows such great bounties and favours upon them that are impossible to describe. Allah, Most High, shows mercy ten times on the one who invokes peace and blessings upon the prophet once[131], He wipes away ten of his mistakes, and raises his rank by ten degrees[132]. The angel Gabriel also asks

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130. The commentators explain the angels being a witness on Fridays as follows: On Fridays the angels come and stand at the door of the masjid and write down who arrives at the masjid in order. They shake hands and greet those who pray and ask for their forgiveness. They also bear witness to the other good deeds of the believers.
131. See Tirmidhi, Witr, 21/485. In addition see Muslim, Salat, 70; Abu Dawud, Witr, 26/1530; Nasai, Adhan, 37/676.
132. See Nasai, Sahw, 55/1290.

for forgiveness ten times for the one who invokes *salawat* once and for the one who sends *salam,* he sends *salam* ten times[133].

Almighty Allah cannot be pleased with our remaining indifferent to His Beloved whom He sent as a mercy to all the worlds. This is why those who are miserly when it comes to reciting *salat u salam* upon the prophet will lose their way to Paradise[134]. Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) has said:

"If a gathering sits in an assembly and does not remember Allah or invoke peace and blessings upon their prophet then this is a great defect on their part and a cause for their painful loss and regret. They will also be deserving of punishment by Allah. If Allah Most High so wills He will punish them, or if He so wills He will forgive them" (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 8/3380).

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) has said:

"To invoke peace and blessings upon the prophet (with sincerity) will nullify sins quicker than water extinguishes fire. To send greetings of peace to him (with love) is more virtuous than freeing many slaves. To love the Messenger of Allah is better than the essence of life itself and striking with a sword in the way of Allah" (Hatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarihu Baghdad,* Beirut 1422, VIII, 39).

133. See Nasai, Sahw 55/1293.
134. See Ibn Maja, Iqama, 25.

2. Abu Bakr as Siddiq

(May Allah be happy be with him) [573 - 634]

Abu Bakr's (May Allah be happy be with him) real name was Abdullah. His pure lineage meets with that of the prophet's grandfather Murra ibn Ka'b at the sixth generation. He was two years younger than the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

In the 38 years of life before he became Muslim he never drank alcohol, nor worshipped an idol and thus displayed a pure and model personality. When Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) announced his prophethood, he believed in him immediately. He was the first man to be honoured with becoming Muslim.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was the most beloved friend of the Messenger of Allah[135]. In the Qur'anic expression, he was the "second of the two"[136].

He was dedicated to the Messenger of Allah with his life, his wealth and his family, and spent his life and his entire wealth in preserving and spreading Islam.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was a man of utmost discernment, with a great capacity to perceive the religion and its mysteries and wisdom. He was a very generous man, gentle in nature, who knew where, when and how to speak. He spoke little and also advised his commanders and governors during his caliphate to speak little.

135. See Bukhari, Ashabu an-Nabi, 5; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 8; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 4.
136. See Tawbah, 9:40.

He was the one the most capable of understanding the Qur'anic verses and the words of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)[137]. Throughout his life he never parted from the prophet. Even at those times when they were physically separated, he was together with him in his heart, and there was a constant bond between them.

The blessed Companions knew the worth of Abu Bakr. They showed the utmost care towards him in the knowledge that "if we anger him, we will anger the Messenger of Allah, and when the Messenger of Allah is angered then Allah, Most High, will be angered and then we will be ruined"[138]. The prophet gave him the following eternal good tidings:

"O Abu Bakr! Is it not enough for you that you will be the first person of my community to enter Paradise?" (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 8/4652).

His personality and character

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was gentle and good-tempered by nature, and was a man of deep compassion and mercy. However when it came to the matter of duties and responsibilities he showed zero tolerance. He was loved by everyone due to the soundness of his ideas, the uprightness in his treatment of and courtesy towards others, the breadth of his experience, the control he had over his *nafs*, and his sincerity. He was pleasant and cheerful, a friend of Allah and His Messenger with good character, behaviour and he was well-spoken. People would easily become familiar with him and their love for him would increase over time. Even in the period of ignorance he was modest and humble. He was very dignified, generous and noble[139].

There was a tremendous balance in his life. He was always humble and modest but never did he display lowliness or incapacity. He was always dignified but never did he become proud or arrogant. He was extremely forgiving, tolerant, tender, and soft-natured, however he also knew how to be strong and brave when the need arose. He was a model of balance and moderation in his every state.

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137. See Bukhari, Ashabu an Nabi, 3; Muslim, Fadailu as Sahaba, 2; Abu Dawud, Malahim, 17/4338; Tirmidhi, Tafsir 22/3171, Manaqib 15/3659; Nasai, Jihad 1.
138. See Ahmad, IV, 58; Hakim, II, 188/2718.
139. See Ibn Sad, III, 188; Ramazanoğlu Mahmud Sami, *Abu Bakr as Siddiq (ra)* p 115-118.

His being *as-Siddiq*

When the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was to inform the Quraysh about the event of the Isra and the Mi'raj he said to the angel Gabriel:

"O Gabriel. My people will not support me".

Gabriel replied:

"Abu Bakr will affirm you. He is *siddiq*" (Ibn Sa'd, I, 215)

When the pagans did in fact hear of the event, they immediately ran to Abu Bakr saying:

"Your friend claims to have gone to the Masjid al-Aqsa in one night, and from there to the heavens and returned to Mecca before the morning. What do you say to that?"

Abu Bakr replied:

"Whatever he says is true. There is no possibility of him lying. I believe in advance in whatever he says".

The pagans repeated:

"Do you affirm what he says, that he went to the Bayt al-Maqdis in one night and returned?"

Abu Bakr replied:

"Indeed I do. What is so incredible about that? I swear by Allah that he tells me news comes to him from Allah at any time of the day or night and I believe him without a doubt".

Later Abu Bakr went to the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) who was sitting in the Ka'bah. He listened to what the prophet had to say about the event and said:

"*Sadaqta* o Messenger of Allah (You have spoken the truth)".

Allah's Messenger was very pleased with his affirmation and smiling with his radiant smile that lit up the whole world he said to Abu Bakr:

"O Abu Bakr. You are as-Siddiq" (Ibn Hisham, II, 5).

This unshakeable and unfaltering affirmation by Abu Bakr of the Messenger of Allah can only be explained by the strength of faith that he had in his heart. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) once said to him in regard to the strength of his heart:

"You were like a great mountain that not even the most violent of storms could move nor the most intense of tremors could shake"[140].

He was always with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) loved Abu Bakr greatly. He stopped by to see him every day[141]. Moreover, Abu Bakr could find no peace until he had seen Allah's Messenger. He was never separated from the Messenger of Allah. That is, they spent their lives together.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would always visit the house of Abu Bakr either in the morning or in the evening. However on the day that Allah gave him permission to migrate, he came to our house at noon, which was not his habit to do. When my father saw him he said:

"The Messenger of Allah does not come at this time. There must be something important".

When the Messenger of Allah entered, my father rose from where he was sitting and offered him his seat. My sister Asma and I were with my father. The Messenger of Allah said to my father:

"Let those who are present leave now (We are going to discuss an important matter)" My father said:

"O Messenger of Allah, they are my daughters (do not worry that they will cause any harm). May my mother and father be sacrificed for you, what is this important matter?"

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140. Abu Nuaym, *Ma'rifatu as Sahaba,* I, 264.
141. See Ibn Sa'd, III, 172.

The Messenger of Allah replied:

"Allah Most High has given me permission to migrate from Mecca". My father asked:

"O Messenger of Allah. Am I to accompany you?"

The prophet replied:

"Yes we will be together".

Abu Bakr began to weep with joy. I swear by Allah that until that day I did not know that a person could cry from happiness (Ibn Hisham II, 97-98).

During the migration to Madina, as they were heading towards the cave of Thawr, Abu Bakr would sometimes walk ahead and sometimes behind the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Allah's Messenger asked him:

"O Abu Bakr. Why are you doing that?"

Abu Bakr replied:

"O Messenger of Allah. When I think that the pagans may catch up to you from behind, I walk behind you and when it occurs to me that they may be lying in wait for you ahead, I walk in front of you".

Later they reached the cave of Thawr. Abu Bakr said:

"O Messenger of Allah. Wait here until I clean out the cave". He then entered the cave and began to clear it out. He was checking everywhere with his hands and when he found a hole, he would cut off a piece of his robe and plug the hole with it. He used his entire upper garment to plug up all the holes except for one. After he stuck his heel into that hole he said:

"You may now enter o Messenger of Allah".

Seeing that Abu Bakr was no longer wearing an upper garment he asked him in surprise:

"Where is your dress o Abu Bakr?"

Abu Bakr then told him what he did. The Messenger of Allah was very touched by this noble act of his and he raised his blessed hands and prayed for Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him)[142].

At one time when the pagans had come close to the cave, Abu Bakr began to become extremely anxious and said to the prophet:

"If they slay me, I am only one person and I will pass away. However if something happens to you, then this community will be ruined".

The prophet would pray standing with Abu Bakr watching out for him. At one point he said:

"The Meccans are searching for you. By Allah I am not worried about myself. But I fear that they will harm you".

The Messenger of Allah replied:

"O Abu Bakr. Grieve not, for surely Allah is with us" (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* III, 223-224; Diyarbakri, I, 328-329).

When Abu Bakr saw the feet of the pagans who were searching about, he said:

"O Messenger of Allah. If one of them just happens to bow down and look they will definitely see us". The Messenger of Allah replied:

"O Abu Bakr! What do you think of two (persons) the third of whom is Allah" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 9/9; Muslim, Fadail as-Sahaba, 1).

During his caliphate, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once heard some men talking as if they held him to be superior to Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him). Umar became very angry. Later he remembered the difficult days of the migration. He remembered the night that the Messenger of Allah spent with Abu Bakr in the cave of Thawr and with great longing he said:

"By Allah. That one night of Abu Bakr is better than all of Umar's family..." (Hakim, III, 7/4268).

142. See Hakim, III, 7/4268; Ibn Kathir, *al Bidaya,* III, 222-223; Ali al Qari, *Mirkat,* X, 381-382/6034; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 33.

And so it was that at the Thawr stage during this elevated journey of Abu Bakr's (with the prophet), for three days and nights, he witnessed many divine mysteries, and was subject to many secrets and wisdom that emerged from the heart of the prophet.

He was honoured with a special closeness to and a unique spiritual interaction with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Overwhelmed by the divine mystery in that cave, which became a form of schooling in which his heart was opened up he attained the degree of being 'the second of the two, the third of whom was Allah'. The prophet said to his dear friend: "**Grieve not, for surely Allah is with us**"[143]**.** He inspired in him the nature of the mystery of '*maiyyah'*, that is, the peaceful state that the heart reaches as a result of being with Allah. As was mentioned before, the gnostics describe this state as being the beginning of *khafi* or private *dhikr*, and one of the most important manifestations of the spiritual inspiration that allows the heart to be content and at peace with Allah.

Thus as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first 'fortunate' addressee of this prophetic training and inspiration and is considered the first link, after the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), in this Golden Chain that will, by the will of Allah, continue until the end of time.

From this we can also gather that the purpose of all elevated journeys emerges in proportion to one's love, sacrifice and service to Allah and His Messenger. The condition of love is that one loves the things that one's beloved loves. This is an important step in taking on the state of one's beloved and becoming like him and Abu Bakr's (may Allah be pleased with him) life is filled with countless examples of this. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) once said to him:

"You are my friend at the head of the Fountain of Kawthar in Paradise, and in the cave" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3670).

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would frequently mention the names of Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) when he spoke. He would speak of how they performed some task together or how they went somewhere together. In regards to certain won-

143. Tawbah, 9:40.

drous phenomenon that people had trouble believing he would say: “I believe this and so do Abu Bakr and Umar”. This shows that they were never apart and were constantly together (Bukhari, Ashabu an-Nabi, 6, 8; Ahmad, I, 109, 112).

Umar (May Allah be happy be with him) narrates:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would talk to Abu Bakr about the affairs of the Muslims until late in the night, and I would sit with them” (Tirmidhi, Salat, 12/169).

One time Allah’s Messenger entered the masjid, with Abu Bakr on one side and Umar on the other. The prophet was holding their hand saying:

“We will be raised like this on the Day of Judgement” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3669).

Annihilating oneself in the prophet

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) lost himself in the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) with great loyalty, submission, love and passion. He experienced a bond of the heart with him to the highest degree. Until his very last breath he abandoned his own self, with the fire of divine love and could only find life in the Messenger of Allah’s existence. At every meeting and every discussion with the Messenger of Allah, he experienced a different ecstasy and enthusiasm. Even when he was in the presence of Allah’s Messenger his love and longing for him increased when it should have been satisfied; it was as if he had become one with him. It was because of this that the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Abu Bakr is from me and I am from him. Abu Bakr is my brother in this world and the next”[144].

This state of being one was only realised after many sacrifices and at a great price. A person pays the greatest price for the sake of his love. The biggest price paid in this fleeting world, is the price of divine love.

In order to drown in the profound pleasure of friendship with Allah and His Messenger, Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) paid every price

144. Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 20.

for love of Allah and His Messenger, without hesitation and lived his life in this struggle and with this excitement.

One day Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) stood at the Ka'bah inviting the people to belief in Allah and His Messenger. The pagans became enraged and began to trample and severely beat Abu Bakr and his fellow believers. The perverse Utbah stood on top of Abu Bakr and began to stomp on him, kicking his face with his iron-soled shoes. Abu Bakr was left in a bloodied state. His tribe, the Bani Taym, finally managed to save Abu Bakr from the hands of the pagans and took him home in that state. They feared he would die.

Towards the evening Abu Bakr finally came to his senses and the first question he asked, with great difficulty, was:

"How is the Messenger of Allah? Is he well?" His mother Umm al-Khayr kept saying:

"Why do you not eat or drink something?" But it was as if Abu Bakr did not even hear and he kept asking:

"How is the Messenger of Allah? What is he doing?"

When it was night he went with great difficulty and in secret to Dar al-Arkam to see the Messenger of Allah, and did not eat or drink anything. As soon as he saw him he knelt down and said:

"May my mother and father be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah. That vile sinner knocked me about, that is all, I am fine"[145].

The following event also demonstrates the state of Abu Bakr who reached a peak in '*fana fil Rasul'*[146]:

During the conquest of Mecca he brought his aged, blind father to the Messenger of Allah so that he could become Muslim. The Messenger of Allah said to him:

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145. See Ibn Asir, *Usdu al Ghaba,* VII, 326; Ibn Kathir, *al Bidaya,* III, 81.
146. *fana fil-Rasul*: This is a concept in tasawwuf in which a person loses themselves in another. Their own existence loses its importance and their whole self becomes devoted to another, in this case to the Messenger of Allah (translator's note)

"O Abu Bakr! Why did you tire your aged father, I could have gone to him".

Abu Bakr replied:

"It is more fitting that he come to you. Also by means of this I wanted my father to gain extra reward".

When Abu Quhafa extended his hand to the blessed hand of Allah's Messenger to make his pledge to him, Abu Bakr became very emotional and began to weep. When the Messenger of Allah asked him why he was weeping he replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! How I wish that the hand that now reaches out to you to make its pledge to you had have been the hand of your uncle Abu Talib, and Allah could have pleased you instead of me. You loved him greatly and so desired that he have faith..." (See Haysami, VI, 173-174; Ibn Sa'd, V, 451).

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) would always say:

"By Allah it is more pleasing to me to watch out for and protect the relatives of Allah's Messenger more than my own relatives" (Bukhari, Ashab an-Nabi 12, Maghazi 14).

One time the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"I never benefitted from the wealth of anyone as much as I benefitted from the wealth of Abu Bakr".

Abu Bakr perceived in these words a kind of separateness in these complimentary words and he said in tears:

"Do not I and all of my wealth belong to you o Messenger of Allah?" (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11; Ahmad, II, 253).

He thus declared that he had dedicated his entire existence and had virtually lost himself in him.

The closest intimate to the prophetic secret

The heart of Abu Bakr was like a clear mirror reflecting the realm of the heart of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In this

respect then he was the most embodied example of becoming lost (*fani*) in the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). As a result of this state of *fana*, everything related to the Messenger of Allah gained deep meaning within his heart.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) reached such a state that he became the leading Companion in the matter of perceiving the wisdom in the prophet's words and acts. With his superior foresight and deep discernment he was able to comprehend the fine details and nuances of the prophet that nobody else was able to.

The following verse was revealed at the Farewell Pilgrimage:

'…Today I have perfected your deen for you and completed My blessing upon you and I am pleased with Islam as a deen for you…' (Maida, 5:3).

That day, everyone was pleased at the religion having been completed. However, with his great insight, Abu Bakr sensed that this was an indication that Allah, Most High, would soon invite His Beloved Messenger to the eternal realm. He was drowned in sorrow from the pain of separation.

Another example that demonstrates the fine discernment of Abu Bakr:

During the last days of the Messenger of Allah, his illness became so severe that he was unable to go to the masjid to pray. He appointed Abu Bakr to lead the congregation in prayer. However, at one point he felt well enough to go to the masjid. After counselling his Companions he said the following:

"Allah gave one of His servants the choice between this world and that which is with Him, and the servant chose that which is with Allah..."

Hearing these words the delicate and tender heart of Abu Bakr was filled with sorrow and he began to weep. He sensed that this was a kind of farewell of the prophet. He was the closest intimate to the prophetic secret. He began to weep like the reed-flute (the *ney)* which laments at separation. Sobbing he said:

"May my mother and father be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah. We would sacrifice our fathers, our mothers, our lives, our wealth and our children for you..." (Ahmad, III, 91).

No one else in that congregation was able to sense the profound emotional state of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and that he was in a state of giving his farewells to the world. In fact, the Companions did not understand why Abu Bakr was weeping and they said to each other in surprise:

"How strange is this old man who weeps when the Messenger of Allah speaks of a righteous person who chooses to go back to his Lord" (Bukhari, Salat, 80).

They did not even imagine that the righteous slave who chose that which was with Allah was in fact the prophet himself and they did not perceive the truth that Abu Bakr perceived.

At that point the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), in an attempt to console the sorrowful heart of Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) and to declare his worth in front of the other Companions said:

"We have paid back in kind, or more, all of the goodness that has been done to us by others, however Abu Bakr is an exception...He has done so much good to us that Allah will be the one to reward him on the Day of Judgement.

Be it with his words or with his wealth, he is the one who has offered me the most. If I were to have taken an intimate friend other than my Lord I would have taken Abu Bakr to be my friend. However Islamic brotherhood is more superior"[147].

Only a few days before the Messenger of Allah passed away, he said:

"Let all of the private doors that open on to the Masjid close except that of Abu Bakr's. Let it remain open.[148] *I see a light over his door"*[149].

All of the doors were closed while Abu Bakr's door remained open. This is an indication that a private door to closeness to the Messenger of Allah can

147. What is meant here by the term 'friend' is that state of the servant in which there should be closeness to Allah only and love for Him only. Thus this hadith shows us that love shown for other human beings which borders on divine love is wrong and that one should remain within the limits of 'Islamic brotherhood' in the love shown for another.
148. Bukhari, Ashabu an Nabi 3, Manaqibu al Ansar 45, Salat 80; Muslim, Fadailu as Sahaba 2; Tirmidhi, Manaqib 15.
149. Ibn Sa'd, II, 227; Ali al Muttaqi, *Kanz,* XII, 523/35686; Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimaşhk,* XXX, 250.

be opened with complete loyalty, submission, obedience, selflessness, friendship and love as that displayed by Abu Bakr as Siddiq.

He sacrificed everything he had in the way of Allah

Abu Bakr was the wealthiest of the Companions but he generously sacrificed everything he had, his life and his wealth after becoming lost in Allah and His Messenger.

When the prophet received his prophethood, Abu Bakr had wealth which amounted to 40 thousand dirhams. He gave a good amount of it for the cause of Islam. He freed Muslim slaves, and gave all manner of support to the believers.

He took his last 5000 dirhams during the migration to Madina and continued to spend it in charity for the sake of Allah[150].

One day his father, Abu Quhafa said to him:

"My son, you are always buying and freeing weak and powerless slaves. Since you are going to free a slave why do you not buy strong and mighty slaves so that they can protect you from all manner or danger and evil?"

Abu Bakr replied:

"Dearest father, the sole purpose in doing what I do is to seek Allah's pleasure. By freeing them I desire only the reward that is with Allah"[151].

Another time when Abu Bakr came to the Messenger of Allah and gave him his entire wealth, Allah's Messenger asked him:

"What have you left for your family o Abu Bakr?"

He replied:

"I have left them Allah and His Messenger" (Abu Dawud, Zakat, 40/1678; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3675).

150. Ibn Sa'd, III, 172; Suyuti, *Tarihu al Khulafa,* p 39.
151. Ibn Hisham, I, 341; Tabari, *Jamiu al Bayan,* XXX, 279 [al Layl, 5-7]; Suyuti, *Lubabu an Nuqul,* p. 257-258.

In fact, Allah's Messenger did not give permission for any of his Companions to donate their entire wealth. He made Abu Bakr an exception and only gave him permission. It was probable that certain hearts would feel regret after giving their entire wealth and living under conditions of poverty, due to the whisperings of Satan and one's *nafs*. Such regret would then cause loss of the reward that would have come from this good deed. However the heart of Abu Bakr as Siddiq was filled with contentment, submission, sincerity and piety and was like an unshakeable fortress of faith riveted with love for Allah and His Messenger. This is why Allah and His Messenger's pleasure made him forget all worldly distress and hardships. In fact these difficulties and hardship were a means to an indescribable pleasure he felt in his heart.

His love of worship

When the pagans prohibited Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) from worshipping in the Ka'bah, he made a place to pray in the front of his house. He began to pray there and recite the Qur'an. Since he was a soft and tender-hearted man he would become very moved when reciting from the Qur'an and be unable to prevent the tears from flowing.

He would recite the Qur'an in such deep ecstasy that the pagan women and children would gather around him to listen in awe. This alarmed the Quraysh and they tried to prevent him. Abu Bakr, however, continued to worship having sought refuge in Allah's protection[152].

Like all those who love Allah, worship carried out at dawn carried a unique importance in the heart of Abu Bakr.

The following event is a clear indication of how fond he was of night worship:

At one time the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had postponed his night prayer (*'isha*) to the last third of the night, for eight or nine nights. Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) said to him:

"O Messenger of Allah! Could you not lead the *'isha* prayer a little earlier so that it will be easier for us to wake up for our night worship".

152. Bukhari, Manaqib al Ansar, 45; Ibn Hisham, I, 395-396.

After that the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) led the *'isha* prayer at an earlier time (Ahmad, V, 47).

One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The one who gives double charity for the cause of Allah will be called from various gates of Paradise as such: "O beloved servant of Allah! Come, here there is goodness and blessings". Those who prayed continually will be called from the gate of prayer, the mujahids will be called from the gate of Jihad, the fasters will be called from the gate of Rayyan, and those who loved to give charity will be invited to Paradise via the Gate of charity".

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) asked:

"May my mother and father be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah. In fact, one who is called from any one of these gates will have no need to be called from another but will there be any people who will be called from all of these gates at the same time?"

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) replied:

"Yes there is and I hope that you will be one of those fortunate people" (Bukhari, Sawm 4, Ashab an-Nabi 5; Muslim, Zakat 85, 86).

On another day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked his Companions who were gathered around him:

"Is there anyone amongst you who is fasting?"

"Is there any amongst you who took part in a funeral prayer?"

"Is there any amongst you who fed the needy?"

"Is there any amongst you who visited the sick?"

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) gave positive answers to all of these questions. Allah's Messenger then said:

"Whoever combines these righteous deeds will certainly enter Paradise" (Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 12).

One day Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) said to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

"O Messenger of Allah. Teach me a prayer that I can read in my salat".

Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Pray as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّى ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِى ظُلْماً كَثِيراً وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ اِلاَّ أَنْتَ فَاغْفِرْ لِى مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَارْحَمْنِى، اِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“O Allah! I have greatly transgressed against my soul. And You are the only One who can forgive sins. In that case forgive me with Your unending grace and have mercy on me. You are the sole One whose forgiveness is unending and whose mercy is endless.” (Bukhari, Adhan, 149; Dawat, 17; Tawhid, 9; Muslim, Dhikr, 48).

On another day Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) said to the Messenger of Allah:

“O Messenger of Allah! Can you teach me some blessed words that I can recite them day and night?”

Allah’s Messenger said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الغَيْبِ وَالشَهَادَةِ، رَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَمَلِيكَهُ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِى وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشِرْكِهِ

“O Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and the seen and unseen realms! O Lord and Master of all things, I bear witness that there is no god but You. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my nafs, the evil of Satan and his inviting me to associate partners with You” He told me to pray as such and to repeat these words in the morning, the evening and before going to bed” (Abu Dawud, Adab 100-101/5067; Tirmidhi, Dawat, 14/3392).

His sensitivity in the matter of lawful provision

One time when Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) had a slave, his slave would give him a certain share of his earnings, and he would eat from that. One day this slave brought everything he had earned. Abu Bakr took one bite to eat when the slave said to him:

“You did not ask me what I earned tonight, whereas you used to ask me about my earnings before.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) replied:

“I was very hungry and forgot to ask... how did you earn this food?

The slave said:

“Even though I knew nothing about fortune-telling I once deceived a man with fortune-telling during the days of ignorance. I encountered him today. That man gave me this food that I offered you today in response”. When Abu Bakr heard this he immediately stuck his finger in his throat (despite the discomfort) and brought up everything he ate saying:

“Woe to you! You almost ruined me”. When he was asked:

“Was it worth such pain for only one bite?”

He replied:

“Even if I knew I would lose my life I would still have brought up that food. The Messenger of Allah said:

“The body that is nourished by unlawful food is worthy of Hellfire”[153].

After this event the following verse was revealed:

“But as for him who feared the Station of his Lord and forbade the lower self its appetites, the Garden will be his refuge” (Nazi ‘at, 79:40-41)[154].

His Caliphate

Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) were like the eyes and the ears of the prophet[155]. The Messenger of Allah said about them: *“After I am gone, follow Abu Bakr and Umar”* (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3662).

153. See Bukhari, Manaqibu al Ansar, 26; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 31; Ahmad b. Abdullah at Tabari, *ar Riyadu an Nadra,* II, 140-141.
154. Qurtubi, XIX, 135.
155. Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3671.

One time a woman came to the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to talk to him about some matter. He gave her some advice and then told her to come back to him after she had done what he said. The woman said:

"O Messenger of Allah! What shall I do if I cannot find you when I come back?"

She meant if he had passed away. He answered:

"If you cannot find me, then go to Abu Bakr." (Bukhari, Ashab an-Nabi, 5; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 10; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3676).

According to a narration by **Qasim ibn Muhammad,** during his last days of illness, Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) told Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) of his intense pain saying:

*"I considered sending word to Abu Bakr and his son that I request that he be the Caliph after I am gone. In this way I wished to prevent the gossip of some about the caliphate and prevent the hope of some who desire it. But then I thought to myself: "Allah, Most High, will not give the caliphate to one who is not worthy of it and the believers will distance one who is not worthy from the caliphate. Or, Allah Most High will distance from the caliphate the one who is not worthy and the believers will not choose one who is not worthy of that position", and so I decided against it" (*Bukhari, Marda 16, Ahkam 51; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba 11).

All of this is an open ruling and decisive proof of the worthiness of Abu Bakr for the caliphate and it leaves no room for argument.

When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away, the Ansar and the Muhajirun all gave their allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Abu Bakr at Saqifa. A day later there was a general allegiance made to him and Abu Bakr, the best of the men after the prophets addressed the people as follows:

"O people! Even though I am not the most righteous amongst you, I have been selected to be your Caliph. If I carry out my duty properly then help me. If I make a mistake then warn me. Uprightness is a sign of trustworthiness and deceit is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights. The strong amongst you shall be weak in my sight until I have wrested from him the rights of others. If a nation abandons strug-

gling in the way of Allah they will be disgraced. If evil becomes widespread amongst a people then Allah will give them a general calamity. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. If I am faulty in obeying Allah and His Messenger then you owe me no obedience. Now rise for prayer and may Allah have mercy on you" [156].

In a later sermon Abu Bakr said:

"I swear by Allah that on no day or night did I ever desire or wish for this position. I never asked Allah Most High for such a thing, not in secret nor in the open. But when the people were left idle I feared that mischief and dissension would arise (I accepted this duty out of anxiety and a feeling of responsibility). Otherwise there is no comfort for me in this position of leadership. Such a weighty task has been placed upon my shoulders that without Allah Most High's help I would not have the strength nor the opportunity to carry it out. How I wish that the strongest amongst the people in terms of leadership were in my place".

The Muhajirun accepted wholeheartedly these sincere words of Abu Bakr. **Ali** and **Zubayr** (may Allah be pleased with them both) commended the new Caliph saying:

"…After the Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr is the one most worthy of this position. He was the sole companion in the cave in which they hid during the migration. Allah Most High mentions him as being the "second of the two" in the Holy Qur'an. We are witness to his honour and his greatness. While he was still alive Allah's Messenger commanded him to lead the people in the prayer"[157].

In a sermon he gave one month after the death of the Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr said:

"Even though I did not desire it, I have been given the position of Caliph. How I wish that someone else would come and take this duty upon themselves. Beware! If you expect me to behave as the Messenger of Allah did, know that I am not capable of this. He was a man upon whom Almighty Allah bestowed revelation and he was made immune to error.

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156. Ibn Sa'd, III, 182-183; Suyuti, *Tarihu al Khulafa, p*. 69, 71-72; Hamidullah, *The prophet of Islam,* II, 1181.
157. Hakim, III, 70/4422; Bayhaqi, *Qubra,* VIII, 152.

I am a mere man like you and I am no better than any of you. Watch over me and if I am upright then follow me but if I slip, then correct me..." [158].

These words are a result of the effect of the beautiful character of the Messenger of Allah upon Abu Bakr. They are a clear indication of how humble he was and how devoted he was to the *Sunnah* and to Allah and His Messenger.

When Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) became Caliph, he asked for help from the Companions. Abu Ubayda (may Allah be pleased with him) helped him with the affairs of the *Bayt al-mal* (State Treasury) whilst Umar took up the duty of judge (*Qadi*). Through the training of the Messenger of Allah, the Blessed Companions had formed the most virtuous of societies. This is why a year would pass and not even two people would come to the court with a complaint.

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) took up the duty of being Abu Bakr's scribe and advisor[159]. He was constantly in the assembly of the Caliph helping him and advising him in matters of keeping public order in the community[160].

Abu Bakr, the prophet's closest friend, his companion in the cave, his father-in-law, his vezir, his adviser and the first Caliph, was able to overcome many troubles during his Caliphate by the grace and help of Allah. In particular he resolutely suppressed the Ridda Wars (the Wars of Apostasy) that began to arise after the death of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). In this way he prevented the dissolution of the Islamic State and ensured the continuation of new conquests.

Abu Bakr never compromised in rulings of religion and was a resolute defender of Islam. Another act of rebellion that arose after the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was the refusal to pay zakat and he showed a resolute resistance against this saying:

"I will fight them if they so much as hide a small piece of rope from their wealth and refuse to pay the zakat for it..."

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158. Ibn Sa'd, III, 212; Ahmad, I, 13; Suyuti, *Tarihu al Khulafa,* p. 71.
159. See Tabari, *Tarih,* Beirut 1387, III, 426; Ibn Asir *al Kamil,* Beirut 1417, II, 263.
160. Ahmad Cevdet Pasha, *Qisas-i Anbiya,* İstanbul 1976, I, 328.

In this way he prevented this dissension from growing and closed all the doors that could lead to distortion of the religion.

Even Umar (May Allah be happy be with him), that model of justice and courage, admired and was left in awe of this resolute and brave stance of his[161].

It was also during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) that the Qur'an was gathered together as a written manuscript (*mushaf)* in the exact way it was revealed to the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It was compiled with great care from the palm leaves upon which it had been written, from flat stones, fine slabs and from the memories of the *hafiz* (memorisers of the Qur'an).

Thus many likely causes of dissension that would have arisen in matters of religion were prevented. In short, Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) signed his name to many important acts of service to the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) by allowing them to advance in the direction of the Qur'an and the sunnah and showed an extraordinary effort in ensuring that they progress in unity and togetherness. His caliphate, which lasted for only 2 years and 3 months, was a period filled with prosperity and blessings in Islamic history, like the afternoon shadow, short in time but whose shadow is long.

His humility, compassion and forgiving nature

After he became caliph, Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) continued to live a life of modesty and abstention just as he had done prior to becoming caliph. He would milk the sheep of the orphan girls in his neighbourhood and see to their needs. His neighbours assumed that after he became Caliph he would be too preoccupied, or that his living conditions would change and they would therefore not receive any help from him. However nothing changed. He continued to milk the orphans' sheep and fulfil their needs with the same humility as before[162].

Almighty Allah praises those of His servants who have such beautiful character as follows:

161. Ali al-Qari, *Mirkat*, X, 381-383/6034.
162. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 80.

'The slaves of the All-Merciful are those who walk lightly on the earth…' (Furqan, 25:63)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said**:** *"In my ummah the most merciful towards the ummah is Abu Bakr..."* (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 32/3790-3791).

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was also known by the title '*Awwah'*[163]*, due to his tenderness, his grace, his compassion and his mercy*[164].

One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was sitting with his Companions when a man came and insulted Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was offended but remained silent and did not respond. That person came back a second time and insulted him once more, causing him pain. Abu Bakr remained silent once more. When the man came back a third time and insulted him, Abu Bakr gave him a fitting reply. At that point the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) immediately rose and left. Abu Bakr raced after him saying:

"O Messenger of Allah. Did I offend you?

Allah's Messenger replied:

"No I am not. It is only that an angel came down from the heavens and was refuting what that person said to you and responded in your place. But when you responded and defended yourself that angel went and in his place came Satan. And I cannot not stay in a place where Satan is" (Abu Dawud, Adab, 41/4896).

He preferred the hereafter always

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) is reported to have said:

"I see people as two groups, those who desire this world and those who desire the hereafter. However I prefer my Lord...When I entered Islam two deeds met me; those of this world and those of the hereafter. I always chose those of the hereafter..."[165]

163. *Awwah* means 'the one who sighs much' (Translator's note)
164. Ibn Sa'd, III, 171.
165. Ramazanoglu Mahmud Sami, ibid, p. 121.

Abu Bakr saw this world as the tillage of the hereafter and he would pray as follows:

"O Allah! Expand this world for me and make me abstain from it".

That is, what he meant was 'first give me this world but then remove love for it from my heart so that I am protected from its hazards and let me be in poverty and want of my own accord and desire'[166].

Before and after he became caliph, not once did he incline towards this world. Just like the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), his sole desire was that he complete his journey to the hereafter, with peace of heart, free from the weight of the world and with an eagerness to meet his lord. This is why, close to his death, he made a last request to have a piece of land that he owned sold in order to return the wage to the state treasury that he received out of necessity while he was caliph[167].

While he was on his death bed he told his daughter Aisha (may Allah be pleased with them both) to give the camel from which they drank their milk, the pot with which he dyed his clothes, and the *qadi* robe he wore to Umar (May Allah be happy be with him). The reason he gave for this was that he benefited from these while attending to the affairs of the Muslims. After her father's death Aisha gave these to Umar, the new caliph, who when he received them said:

"Abu Bakr. May the mercy of Allah be upon you. You have left those who came after you in a very difficult position"[168].

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) would also make the following sincere supplication:

"O Allah! Let the best part of my life be its end, let the best part of my deeds be their result, and let the best day of my life be the day I am reunited with You"[169].

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166. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain p*. 32, Istanbul 2005, Erkam Publications.
167. Ibn Asir *al-Kamil,* II, 428-429.
168. Ahmad, *al-Zuhd,* s. 110-111; Ibn Sa'd, III, 192-194; Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 78-79.
169. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p. 103.

His Death

According to a narration by **Ibn Umar** (may Allah be pleased with him) the cause of death of Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) was the profound sorrow he felt at the demise of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In fact he was so saddened by his death that his blessed body gradually melted away and became weaker and weaker until he eventually passed away[170].

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"At one point during the illness which led to my father's death I went to his side and he asked me:

"How many pieces of cloth did you shroud the prophet in?"

"We shrouded him with three pieces of white cotton, not including the shirt and headpiece".

"On which day did the prophet pass away?"

"On a Monday"

"What day is it today?"

"Monday".

"I hope that my death comes between now and tonight" (after that he said:)

"If I die tonight do not make me wait until tomorrow (to be buried). The most pleasing of days and nights to me is that which is the closest to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)" (Ahmad, I, 8).

Then Abu Bakr looked at the dress he had on and saw that it had a saffron stain on it. He said:

"Wash this and then add two more garments and shroud me with these".

"Dear father, this garment is old". Abu Bakr replied:

"The living are more worthy of wearing new clothes than the dead. The shroud of the dead is going to be stained with blood anyway".

170. Hakim, III, 66/4410; Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 81.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) passed away on a Monday night, and was buried before the morning (Bukhari, Janaiz, 94).

He was reunited with the Messenger of Allah, whom he had missed for 2 years, 3 months and 10 days. May Allah be pleased with him.

Like the Messenger of Allah, he was 63 years old when he passed away. The date was the 22nd of *Jumada al akhir* 13 (the 23rd of August, 634).

His last words were the dua from the following verse:

تَوَفَّنِى مُسْلِمًا وَاَلْحِقْنِى بِالصَّالِحِينَ

"O Allah! ....take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous (salihuun)..." (Yusuf, 12:101)[171]**.**

His words of wisdom

• "There is no good in:

– a word that does not seek the pleasure of Allah;

– wealth that is not spent in the way of Allah;

– a person whose ignorance overrules his gentleness;

– a person who fears being blamed for a task he will do for the sake of Allah[172].

• "There is no blood bond between Allah and any of His creatures. Being subject to good and protected from evil (and thereby coming closer to Allah) is only possible through obedience to Him and abiding by His commands"[173].

• "Know well that there is a deed that Allah desires to be done by day and does not accept at night; and there is a deed that He desires be done at night which He does not accept during the day"[174].

171. Kawthari, *Irgamu al-Marid* p. 23.
172. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 36.
173. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 101.
174. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 36.

• "Allah is not pleased with the word of His servant that he does not act upon".

• "Talking too much makes a person forgetful".

• "Think well about what you say, when you say it and to whom you say it".

• "The friends of Allah are of three classes (according to their personality). Each three class is then known by three signs:

The first class are those who are in a state of *khawf* (fear of Allah). These are:

1. Always humble

2. However many good deeds they have done, they always see them as being insufficient.

3. They consider their small mistakes to be great.

The second class are those who have *raja* (hope):

1. They are an example for people in their every state and act, displaying virtue and beauty.

2. They become the most generous of people by spending their wealth in the way of Allah.

3. They always have a good opinion about the servants of Allah.

The third class are the *arif* (gnostics) who worship Allah with love and passion.

1. They spend out of what they love for the sake of Allah.

2. They aim for the pleasure of Allah in every state and act and thus are not affected by the censure of the ignorant and are not uneasy at their crude behaviour

3. They try to perform acts that are difficult for their nafs and in spite of it; they obey the commands and prohibitions of Allah in every state and act"[175].

• "Be the slave of the *arifun* who know Allah".

175. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Munabbihat*, p 94-95.

• "Do not hide your state from one who wants to guide you. Otherwise you will have deceived yourself".

• "Reform yourself so that people will treat you well".

• "Four kinds of people are from the righteous servants of Allah":

1. The one who is pleased when he sees a person who has repented,

2. The one who pleads to his Lord for the forgiveness of his sins,

3. The one who prays for his Muslim brother in his absence,

4. The one who helps and serves the person needier than himself.

• "If faith is limited to the mosque (and is not reflected in every aspect of one's life), if property remains in the hands of the misers, weapons remain in the hands of the cowards, and power remains in the hands of weak, then affairs will go awry".

• "An intelligent person is one who has *taqwa*; an ignorant person is one who is oppressive".

• "Allah, Most High, mentions in the Qur'an both the reward and punishment that He has promised so that the servant can vie for worship and fear punishment".

• "If you miss out on doing a good deed try to make up for it, and when you do, try to do it even better" .

• "Doing good to others protects a person from calamities and misfortunes".

• "Do not argue with your neighbour for everyone will leave but they will remain"[176].

• "Flee from fame so that honour can follow you. Be prepared for death so that you can be given life".

• "There is no misfortune, which has no other that is not worse than it".

• "There is never harm in patience and no benefit in sorrow and haste".

176. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 100.

• "Patience is half of faith, whilst *yaqin* or certainty (freedom from doubt and a state of complete confidence) is all of it".

• "Ask Allah for health. After *yaqin* (certainty) no one has been given anything more virtuous than health".

• "To me, being healthy and being grateful for it is more acceptable than being patient after being subject to a misfortune and being tested".

• "This world is a trading place for the believer; day and night is his capital; good deeds are his produce; Paradise is his gain and Hellfire is his loss".

• Whenever Abu Bakr heard somebody praise him he would say:

"O Allah, You know me better than I know myself and I know myself better than they do. O Allah, make me better than what they think of me. Forgive me for the mistakes that they do not know about and do not take me to account for what they say about me"[177].

• "When a servant becomes proud on account of a worldly bounty, Allah detests him until that bounty leaves him"[178].

• "Beware of boasting! Why would a person who was created from the earth and who will return to it, and who will be eaten by worms, boast? He is alive today, dead tomorrow"[179].

• Abu Bakr once said in a sermon:

"Where are those beautiful people whom everyone admires? Where are those brave young men proud of their youth?

Where are those rulers who built magnificent cities and encased them with high fortresses? Where are those heroes who never knew defeat on the battlefield? Time has decayed them and razed them to the ground. They have all been buried in the darkness of the grave. **Make haste, make haste! Come**

177. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 104.
178. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 37; Hani, *al-Hadaik,* p. 288.
179. Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 101.

to your senses before it is too late and quickly prepare for what is to come after death! Save yourselves, save yourselves"[180].

• "Ponder on the state of those servants of Allah who came and went before you. Where were they yesterday and where are they now?"[181].

180. Bayhaqi, *Shuab*, VII, 364/10595; Suyuti, *Tarih al-Khulafa*, p 102.
181. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 35-36.

3. Salman Farisi (May Allah be happy be with him) [d. 654]

He was given the name "Salman" by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He is also known as Salmani Pak (Salman, the Pure), Salman al-Khayr (Salman, the Good), Salman al-Hakim (the Wise) and Salman al-Muhammadi, due to his beautiful character, and the depth of his heart and spirit. Whenever he was asked about his lineage, he gave the following answer to demonstrate how he had become annihilated in Allah:

"I am *Salman ibn Islam* (Salman, the son of Islam)"

His determination to reach Allah and the Truth

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) told the story of his determined search and efforts to find Allah, full of wisdom, to his student Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).

"I lived in a village called Jiyye in Isfahan. My father was the religious leader of our village. I was his most beloved person in the world. Due to his extreme love for me he never let me part from him and kept me at home like a daughter. I had so much given myself to my father's religion, Zoroastrianism (Fire worship) that I had taken up the duty of looking after the fire. I would not allow it to go out for even a second...

One day my father sent me to our farm as he had to take care of some other matter. I came across a Christian church on the way. I watched what they were doing curiously and said to myself: "By Allah, this religion is better than ours". I stayed there until the sun went down. I did not go to the farm

and asked them: “Where is the origin of this religion?” They told me it was in Damascus.

When my father learned what happened, he chained my feet for fear that I would escape and imprisoned me in the house. I sent word to the Christians in the church: “Let me know when a trade caravan arrives from Syria”. Eventually I went to Syria with the Christian merchants. I asked about who the most learned of their religious men was and immediately went to him and said:

“I wish to enter this religion. I want to stay with you and serve in this church and worship with you”. I then began to stay in the church.

The Bishop of Damascus was an evil and greedy man. He would command the Christians to give charity and then take the money for himself and not give anything to the poor. He had thus saved up seven urns of gold and silver. I began to spite him as I saw what he was doing. Eventually he died. I said to the Christians:

“He was an evil man. He commanded you to give charity but kept what you gave for himself and did not give anything to the poor”. I then showed them his treasure. They said:

“By Allah we will not bury him”. They then hung his corpse and stoned it. They brought another man of religion to replace him. I never saw anybody in that community more virtuous, more indifferent to the world, more in desire of the hereafter, or who worshipped day and night more than he did. When he was on his deathbed I said to him:

“O precious man of religion! I have stayed with you and have never loved anyone as much as I love you. As you see, Allah’s command has come to pass. What do you advise me to do and to whom do you advise me to go?”

“My child! I do not know of anyone here who follows my way. The righteous people have all passed away. Those who are living have changed the original rulings of the religion and have abandoned most of them. However there is a man in Mosul. He is upon my way. Go to him”.

When this respected man passed away, I went to his friend in Mosul and when he passed away I went to Nusaybin upon his advice, and then to a man in Ammuria (a place close to Eskisehir). I purchased an amount of cattle in

Ammuria. Eventually the command of Allah also came to that man of religion and he said to me:

"My child! By Allah! I know of none on earth who I can advise you to go to. However the time is near when the End of Time prophet will appear and his shadow is over us. That prophet will be sent upon the religion of Ibrahim (peace be upon him). He will appear in the land of the Arabs, and will migrate to a land of two black stony tracts amongst date gardens. He will accept a gift, but does not accept charity. He has a seal of prophethood between his two shoulder blades. If you have the strength to go to those lands, then set out immediately".

Sometime later I came across some merchants from the tribe of Kalb and I said to them:

"Take me to the land of the Arabs and I will give you my cattle that you see here". They accepted but when we got to the Wadi al-Qura they betrayed me and sold me to a Jew.

When I saw the date trees there I became hopeful that this was the land to which the End of time prophet would migrate to but I could not be certain. Then the cousin of my master from the Sons of Qurayza came and bought me and took to Madina. By Allah as soon as I saw Madina, I knew that this was the land of migration...

One day I was up in a date tree and my master was sitting in its shade. At that point his cousin came and said:

"May Allah damn the tribes of Aws and Khazraj! By Allah they are now gathered together in the village of Quba at the head of a man from Mecca who claims to be a prophet".

As soon as I heard this I began to tremble and I almost fell upon my master's head:

"What did you say? What did you say?" I asked as I came down from the tree. My master became angry and slapped me harshly, saying:

"What concern is it of yours? Look to your work".

When the evening came I took some food that I had saved up and went to Quba to the Messenger of Allah and said:

"I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have needy and lonely Companions. I have brought some food with me as charity. When I heard about you I felt that you were more deserving of it". I then presented the food to him. The Messenger of Allah said to his Companions:

"Take this and eat it". But he did not eat himself. I said to myself: "This is one".

I then returned to where I was and gathered up some more food. At that point Allah's Messenger had arrived in Madina. I went to him and said:

"I saw that you did not eat from the charity that I gave. This is a gift that I have prepared for you". The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) then ate and told his Companions to eat also. I said to myself: "This is two".

One day the Messenger of Allah had come to Jannat al-Baqi for a funeral and was sitting amongst his Companions. He had two items of *ihram* which wrapped his entire body. I entered his presence and greeted him. I then walked behind him in the hope that I would see his seal of prophethood. Allah's Messenger understood my intention and he lowered his *rida* from his back. As soon as I saw the seal I recognised it and kissed it and began to weep. The prophet said to me:

"Turn around". I went and stood in front of him and told him everything that had happened to me. **The Messenger of Allah was very pleased that his Companions also heard my story**..." (Ahmad, V, 441-444; Ibn Hisham, I, 233-242; Ibn Sa'd, IV, 75-80).

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "*A person shall be with the one he loves*" (Bukhari, Adab, 96). Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) endured much hardship and pain but eventually was united with the beloved that he had been seeking his entire life. His only desire now was to remain with the Beloved of Allah and act according to His commands. Seeing this eagerness and loyalty, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Salman! Can you not make an agreement with your master so that you can be freed from slavery?"

Salman then made an agreement with his master to dig and plant three hundred date saplings and pay him forty *uqiyya*[182] of gold. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) told his Companions:

"*Help your brother*".

Some Companions helped him with ten, some with five, and some with twenty, according to their means. Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"O Salman! After you have dug the holes for the date saplings, let me know and I want to plant them with my own hands".

Salman later said:

"…Not even one of those saplings failed to grow. Every one of them gave fruit at the right year and its fruit was eaten".

During that time a chicken's egg worth of gold was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) from one of the mines. He wiped his blessed tongue over it and said:

"Take this. Almighty Allah will pay your debt with this".

I took the gold and weighed it bit by bit giving it to my debtee. I swear by Allah that I weighed exactly forty *uqiyya* of gold from that small nugget. It was so fruitful that had I have weighed the mountain of Uhud with it, it would have been heavier".

Salman was now free to be by the prophet's side always, to take part in the Battle of Handaq and all other battles[183].

In another narration it is said that Abu Bakr bought and set Salman (may Allah be pleased with them both) free under the order of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)[184]. Since he was freed from slavery with the help of the prophet he was also called '*mawla an-nabi*', i.e. the prophet's freed slave.[185]

182. 1 *uqiyya* corresponded to approximately 128g. .
183. See Ahmad, V, 443-444; Ibn Asir, *Usdu al Ghaba,* II, 419; Ibn Abdilber, II, 634-638; Ayni, *Umda,* XIII, 116.
184. Hakim, III, 692/6543; Bayhaqi, *Dalail,* II, 91.
185. Hakim, III, 691/6539; Mizzi, *Tahzibu al Kamal,* XI, 247.

From then on Salman never parted from the prophet, day and night and he became one of the Ashab-i Suffa.

Salman was very pure by nature and had a very clean heart. He was *mutawakkil*, which means that he had great trust in Allah. He so wished to be in the land of the Prophet when the light of guidance would rise there, he did not care about the price he had to pay, and endured great hardship to this end.

His story is full of wisdom for us and is a living example of seeking Allah and the truth and the sacrifices made in this way and the enthusiasm of living one's faith with passion. If much we love the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in this world and are one with him in his state and actions, then we will also be close to him on that difficult Day of Judgement, by the will of Allah.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

We were once sitting with the Messenger of Allah when the chapter Jumu'a was revealed. The following verse was revealed:

"...And others of them who have not yet joined them. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise' (Jumu'a, 62:3).

I asked the prophet:

"Who are people to whom this verse refers to, o Messenger of Allah?" He did not answer me until I repeated my question three times. Salman Farisi was also with us. The Messenger of Allah placed his blessed hand on the back of Salman and said:

"If faith was to be found near the Pleiades, then some brave men from the nation of this man would reach it" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 62/1; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 231).

He was considered to be of the *ahl al bayt*

The sacrifices that Salman made in the way of Allah, the love he felt for the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his devotion to his Sunnah were a means for him to be considered from the *ahl al-bayt*. With his every state and in particular his selfless efforts in the way of Allah, Salman (May

Allah be happy be with him) was such a beautiful example that the Ansar and the Muhajiruns both made claims to him saying:

"Salman is from us".

In an attempt to conciliate them and as a compliment to Salman, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

سَلْمَانُ مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

*"Salman is from us. He is a member of my family (*ahl al bayt*)"*[186].

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) also said:

"Take care and know that my friends are not from my father's family. My true friends are Allah, Most High, and the righteous believers." (Muslim, Iman, 366; Bukhari, Adab, 14).

"Undoubtedly my true friends are the people of taqwa.*"* (Abu Dawud, Fitan, 1/4242).

The rank of Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) in the eyes of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was very different. Whenever the Companions wished to ask the prophet something they would use Salman as an intermediary for he knew very well how to speak to the Messenger of Allah.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

"On some nights Salman Farisi would be alone with the Messenger of Allah. He was with the Messenger of Allah almost more than we were" (Ibn Abdi Barr, *al-Istiab,* II, 636; Ibn al-Asir *Usdu al-Ghaba,* II, 510).

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) narrates:

"One time when I was ill, the Messenger of Allah came to visit me. When he left he said:

يَا سَلْمَانُ! كَشَفَ اللّٰهُ ضُرَّكَ وَغَفَرَ ذَنْبَكَ

186. Hakim, III, 691/6541; Haythami, VI, 130; Ibn Hisham, III, 241; Ibn Sa'd, IV, 83.

وَعَافَاكَ فِى دِينِكَ وَجَسَدِكَ اِلٰى اَجَلِكَ

"O Salman! May Allah cure your illness and forgive your sins. And may He give strength to your religion and health to your body until you die" (Haysami, II, 299).

Salman-i Pak never ever received charity[187] nor did he accept anything from anyone.[188]

When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) established the state organisations of that time, he assigned the same amount of money to Salman as he did to Hasan and Hussain (may Allah be pleased with them) as he accepted him as being from the *ahl al bayt*[189]. However, Salman, who possessed an ascetic heart, gave this away in charity and preferred to earn his livelihood making and selling straw baskets that he made from palm fibres.[190]

His virtues

Salman-i Pak (may Allah be pleased with him) was a scholar and an ascetic who gave no importance to this world, who stayed away from luxury and extravagance, who was modest and humble and of good character. He was an extremely intelligent, brave and selfless Companion. He had a unique closeness to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and was one of the Companions who gave *fatwa* during the prophet's lifetime. He spent his entire life in search of Islam and occupied himself with teaching it to others. He is the first Persian to have become Muslim[191].

One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Allah, Most High, commanded me to love four people and told me that He also loved them". He then mentioned the names of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), Miqdad (may

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187. Ibn Jawzii, *Sifatu as Safwa,* I, 541; Sharani, *Tabakatu al Qubra,* Beirut, undated., I, 23; Hani, *Hadaiq, p*. 295.
188. Ibn Abdi'l Bar, *al Istiab,* II, 635.
189. Tabari, *Tarih,* III, 614; Ibn Asir *al Kamil,* II, 331-332.
190. See Ibrahim Hatiboglu, "Selman al Farisi" article, *DIA,* XXXVI, 442.
191. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 185.

Allah be pleased with him) and Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 20/3718).

Another time he (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Paradise longs for these three people: Ali, Ammar and Salman” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib 34/3797).

The Blessed Companions would go to Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) and ask him to pray for them.

The oppressed would go to him and tell him of their complaints[192].

He was also a scholar whose knowledge it was advised to learn from[193].

One time a man went to the house of Salman and was surprised when he found nothing but a sword and a Qur’an. Salman told him that he had spent all of his wealth in order to arrive safely to the destination that lay before him, the hereafter, which was extremely difficult to reach and whose journey was filled with hardship.

Because Salman had shaved the head of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) he was known as the patron saint of barbers and was called Salman-i Pak.

His connection to Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) and Qasim ibn Muhammad (May Allah have mercy on him)

After the death of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) Salman neither left Madina nor the company of Abu Bakr. He had a very close relationship with Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them both). He learned much from him. He reached a very high rank in the inner and outer sciences.

Meanwhile he was also teaching his own important students. Amongst his own students were many important Companions such as Abu Said al-Khudri, Ibn Abbas and Aws ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with them). Abu

192. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 201.
193. Hakim, III, 304/5183.

Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) also narrated some hadith from him. Qasim ibn Muhammad, the great Tabii'een scholar who was known as one of the *Fuqaha Sab'a*, the seven great scholars of Madina, was also one of his students. He developed and matured from his lessons and spiritual talks.

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) was at the fore ranks of the army that fought the Ridda Wars (Wars of Apostasy) and fought as a leading force[194].

Salman visited Abu Bakr in the final illness that led to his demise and said:

"Give me some advice". Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) began by saying:

"Allah will spread out at your feet the bounties of this world. Take only what you need from them..." He then continued to advise him[195].

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) took part in the conquest of Iran that took place during the caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Since he was Persian himself, he went ahead of the army to invite the Persians to Islam and taught them the religion of Allah. During the most intense time of the battle, he made speeches that increased the morale of the army and reminded them of the hereafter. He greatly benefitted the army with his general knowledge and his experience of the customs of the Persians.

From time to time he acted as commander over the soldiers. Before attacking the fortresses that they had sieged he gave them time and, as he had learned from the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), he first invited them to Islam and addressed them in Persian as follows:

"I am a Persian just like you. As you can see, the Arabs are under my command and they obey me. If you become Muslim, you will gain the same rights as us; and your responsibilities will be the same as ours. If you wish to remain devoted to your religion, we will set you free as long as you agree to pay the *jizya* tax..."[196]

194. Sabir Abduh Ibrahim, *Salman al Farisi,* Baghdad, undated. p 35.
195. Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* VII, 365; Ibn Sa'd, III, 193.
196. Tirmidhi, Siyer, 1/1548.

His worship

One day Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) was amongst a group of people who were remembering Allah. At that point the Messenger of Allah passed by and when he saw them he turned towards them. When he came near them the Companions fell silent out of their respect for him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked them:

"What were you talking about? I saw the mercy that was sent down upon you and I wanted to share in it with you" (Hakim, I, 210/419).

When the darkness of the night fell, Salman would begin to perform the prayer. When he felt tired from praying he would perform *dhikr* of Allah with his tongue. When he tired of this, he would reflect upon Allah's existence, the proofs of His unity and His greatness. Sometime later he would say to himself:

"You have rested enough, now rise and pray". After praying for a certain amount of time he would say to his tongue:

"You have rested enough, now remember Allah".

A major part of the night would pass in this way[197].

All of the Companions, and in particular Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) admired the passion, excitement and deep reverence of Salman's servitude to Allah.

His humility

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) was a sincere, modest and easy-going friend of Allah. He was never a burden on anyone. He was extremely humble.

When the Iranian city of Madain was conquered, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) appointed Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) as its governor. Salman behaved with the greatest justice and civility towards the people and as a result he was greatly loved and respected by them.

197. Hani, *Hadaiq*, p 294.

With his valuable words and wise advice, and his beautiful state and model lifestyle, he spread the teachings of Islam in his homeland and amongst his own people. As a result of his knowledge, his virtue, his beautiful character and superior efforts, Islam rapidly spread throughout that land.

When Salman was the governor of Madain, a person from the tribe of Bani Taym from Syria arrived and brought with him a load of figs. Salman was wearing a simple dress and cloak. The Syrian did not recognise him and when he saw him in this state he said:

“Come and carry this”. Salman went and put the load on his back. When the people saw him they recognised him and said to the man:

“The man that is carrying your load is the governor” The Syrian immediately apologised:

“I’m sorry I did not recognise you”. However Salman responded:

“No harm done. I will not leave this load until I take it to wherever you are going.[198]

When he put the load down he advised its owner as follows:

“Never belittle anyone after this”[199].

One day a man was boasting about himself whilst in Salman’s presence. Salman spoke:

“As for me, I was created from a vile and unpleasant fluid. After I die my body will become a rotting smelly carcass. And then I will come to the Balance which weighs one’s deeds. If my good deeds weigh heavier, only then will I become a noble and valuable person; otherwise if they are light, then I will be the worst of the worst”[200].

One time a person saw Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) kneading dough. He was shocked and asked him:

“Where is your servant?” Salman replied:

198. Ibn Sa‘d, IV, 88.
199. Ibn Asakir, XXI, 433; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* I, 546.
200. Hani, *Hadaiq,* p. 295.

"I sent him on an errand and I did not see fit to give him two tasks to do. It would not have been right to send him to do one task and not do his chore here. That would be unjust"[201].

He would not spend anything when he received his wage. Instead he would earn his livelihood through his own handiwork. He would buy date leaves for one dirham, and weave them into baskets and sell them for three dirhams. He would give one of these dirhams to the place where he bought the date leaves, give out one dirham in charity and spend the other dirham on the needs of his family[202].

After earning an amount of money he would buy meat or fish and prepare the table and invite lepers to eat from it and he would eat with them[203].

His foresight

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had made Salman and Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with them both) brothers.

One day Salman and his brother Abu Darda were eating from the same plate when the plate and the food it contained began to glorify Allah[204].

During another of these visits Salman saw the wife of Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) wearing a very old dress and asked her:

"What is this state?" The woman replied:

"Your brother Abu Darda gives no importance to worldly things or pleasures". At that point Abu Darda offered the meal that he had prepared to Salman saying:

"Come, eat. I am fasting".

"I will not eat unless you eat".

Abu Darda then sat down to eat. When it was night time Abu Darda prepared to perform the tahajjud prayer. Salman said to him:

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201. Mamer bin Rashid, *Jami,* X, 393/19464.
202. Ibn Sa'd, IV, 89; Hani, *Hadaiq,* p. 295.
203. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 200.
204. Bayhaqi, *Dalail,* VI, 63; Ibnu Imad, *Shazaratu al Dhahab,* I, 209-210.

"Sleep". Abu Darda went to sleep. A little while later he tried to wake up again but Salman again said to him:

"Sleep". Towards the end of the night Salman said to him:

"Now wake up" and together they rose and glorified Allah and prayed together. Then Salman said to Abu Darda:

"Your Lord has rights over you, your nafs has rights over you and your family have rights over you. Give each their right".

Abu Darda then went to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and told him what had happened. The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Salman has spoken correctly" (Bukhari, Sawm 51, Adab 86).

In another narration, Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said to Abu Darda:

"Salman is more knowledgeable than you."(Haysami, III, 199-200; Hani, *Hadaik,* p. 297).

Salman was very careful to abide by the rights of his brothers in religion. He even walked all the way from Madain, where he was governor to Damascus to visit his brother Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with them both)[205].

Salman was very cultured and knowledgeable due to him having lived in many different lands. In addition to Persian and Arabic, he also knew Greek and Hebrew.

He suggested the digging of the trench at the Battle of Khandaq, and the use of the catapult and *dabbaba*[206] during the siege of Taif, which he built himself[207].

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205. Bukhari, *al Adabu al Mufrad,* p. 127, no: 346.
206. **Dabbaba**: This was a war tool used to carve into the wall of an enemy fortress in order to move in under the soldiers and be saved from their arrows. It would be covered with animal skin. It can be considered to be the first tank.
207. Bayhaqi, *Dalail,* V, 161; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* IV, 348; Waqidi, II, 445-447.

His *taqwa*

Two men once greeted Salman and asked him:

"Are you not a Companion of the Messenger of Allah?" He replied:

"I do not know". The men were then left in doubt as to whether they had come to the wrong person. Salman explained:

"I saw the Messenger of Allah. I was in his gatherings. However the true Companion (*Sahabi*) is the one who enters Paradise with him" [208].

Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) once sent a letter to Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) which stated: "Let him come to the holy land". Salman wrote back to him as follows:

"It is not land that makes a person holy. What makes a person holy are his deeds. I have heard that you have become a physician and are healing people (that is, you have become a judge and are solving people's problems and making rulings). Happy are you if you can make a correct judgement and find a solution to a person's problem. However if you pretend to be a physician and are acting as a judge even though you are not competent to do so, then beware of making an incorrect ruling and spiritually killing a person, thereby entering Hell".

After that whenever Abu Darda was to make a judgement between two people, he would look after them as they left and say:

"Come back and present your case to me once more. Let there be no misunderstanding. By Allah I fear making a wrong judgement and being a bad judge"[209].

In another letter Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) advised his brother as follows:

"Goodness (*khayr*) does not come from abundant wealth or children. True goodness is an increase in gentleness and your knowledge benefitting you. One's place does not earn reward for a person. Worship Allah as if you

208. Haythami, VIII, 40-41; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* I, 549.
209. *Muwatta',* Wasiya, 7.

see Him and consider yourself amongst the dead (That is, prepare well for death before you die)"[210].

His death

When the death of Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) was near, he said to his wife:

"Bring me the pouch of musk that I had given to you previously. Mix it with a little water and sprinkle it around me. I will be receiving some visitors in a little while. They do not eat or drink but they love beautiful fragrances." (He was indicating the angels)

His wife complied with his request and left the room. When she heard a sound and returned she saw that Salman Farisi had passed away. May Allah be pleased with him" [211].

He passed away in Madain as a martyr in the 34 or 36th year after the hijra which corresponds to the year 654 or 656.[212]

Salman (May Allah be happy be with him) lived a long life. When he passed away he left behind no more than three or four items which valued around 25 or 30 dirhams[213].

His tomb,, which was repaired by Sultan Murad IV, can be found in the town of Salman Pak, near Baghdad[214]

His words of wisdom

• "When night falls people fall into three categories: Those who do what is good for them, and who do not do what is not good for them; those who do what is not good for them, and who do not do what is good for them; and those who do neither what is good nor bad for them, but rather do nothing".

210. Ibn Asir, *Usdu al Ghaba,* II, 510.
211. See Ibn Sa'd, IV, 92; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 207.
212. Hani, *Hadaiq,* p. 298; Muslim, Imara, 165.
213. Ahmad, V, 438; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 197.
214. Ibrahim Hatiboğlu, "Selman Farisi" article, *DIA,* XXXVI, 442.

That is, some people take the opportunity of the darkness of the night and the heedlessness of others, and benefit from it, by waking and taking their ablutions, and praying and bringing life to their night by doing good deeds. These are those who do what is good for them and who abandon what is bad for them.

There are others who take advantage of the darkness of the night and other people's heedlessness to perform acts that Allah has forbidden. They waste their night by submitting to the carnal desires of their nafs. These are those who do what is bad for them and who abandon what is good for them.

And then there are those who sleep until the morning and spend the evening in heedlessness. They end up not having what is good or bad for them[215].

• "The state of a believer in this world is like a patient in front of his doctor. The doctor knows his illness and his medicine. When the patient asks for something harmful, the doctor prevents him from taking it and says:

"Take care and do not even approach that. If you take it will destroy you". He keeps him away from all harmful things until he is cured of his illness and his pains are relieved.

The believer is like this too. He desires to be given many worldly goods that have been given to others. However, Allah, Most High, distances him from his carnal desires and takes him in this state and places him in Paradise[216].

The believers in Mecca were being oppressed and suffering greatly. They looked at the pagans who were trading with various countries and earning great profit and said:

"These unbelievers are travelling about freely throughout the land, whereas we are subject to great deprivation in our efforts to be servants of Allah. The following verse was then revealed:

'Do not be deceived by the fact that those who are unbelievers move freely about the earth. A brief enjoyment; then their shelter will be Hell. What an evil resting-place!' (Al'i Imran, 3:196-197)[217].

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215. Ibn Asakir, XXI, 446; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* I, 549-550.
216. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 206.
217. See Wahidi, *Asbabu an Nuzul, p.* 143; Râzî, *Mafatihu al Ghayb,* IX, 132.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"This world in relation to the hereafter is as when one of you dips his finger into the ocean. Let him look and see how much water remains on his finger." (Muslim, Jannah, 55)

The hardships and difficulties that the believer encounters in this world and bears with patience and contentment are a requirement of divine trial. Using these as a means, Almighty Allah may forgive His servants' sins or raise them in spiritual rank. Consequently it is the art of a perfected and mature heart to meet with patience and contentment the difficulties and trials that one faces…"

• "If you are able, make sure that you are not the first person to enter the market nor the last person to leave! Those places are Satan's battlefield and where he stakes his flag"[218].

• "If you have committed a sin in secret, then obey Him in secret and ask for forgiveness in secret. If you have openly committed a sin, then obey Him openly and ask for forgiveness openly so that they can wipe each other out"[219].

• "Three things made me laugh and three things made me cry. I laughed at the following three things:

1. People are filled with hope about the world; yet death is in pursuit of them.

2. People live in heedlessness; yet they are not unheeded and their every state is recorded. The angels are identifying them at every instant.

3. Some people laugh out loud. Yet they do not know whether they are incurring the wrath of Allah with their heedlessness or whether they are pleasing Him.

One time the Messenger of Allah approached a group of people who were laughing. He said to them: "*Are you laughing while the Book that mentions Paradise and Hell is amongst you*?" After that nobody ever saw any of the people in that gathering ever laugh again until they passed away (Haysami, X, 307)].

218. Muslim, Fadaiul as Sahaba, 100.
219. Hani, *Hadaiq,* p. 298.

The following three things made me cry:

1. Parting from the Messenger of Allah and such special friends as the blessed Companions, and being distant from their spirituality;

2. The terrifying events that will take place at the moment of death;

3. Appearing before the Lord of the Worlds, not knowing whether I will be going to Heaven or Hell." [220]

The Messenger of Alah (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to remember death much, death which uproots the pleasures and desires of the *nafs*[221]. On the Day of Judgement Almighty Allah will command everyone to read their own book of deeds and say: "'**Read your Book! Today your own self is reckoner enough against you**!' [222] On that Day in the Divine Court, hands, feet, skin, eyes, ears and the earth will speak and the cassette that we recorded whilst on earth will be played back to us.

• "Knowledge is a deep ocean but life is short. Take (firstly) as much knowledge as you need for your religion..."[223].

• "Be humble for the sake of Allah. For on the Day of Judgement Allah will raise in importance the one who was humble for Him in this world[224].

• "The livelihood of the ascetic (*zahid*) is worship".

• "Salat is like a scale (a measure of how close a believer is to Allah). Whoever gives it full measure will be given their reward in its entirety and everyone knows about the threat that Allah directs towards those stinters who hand over less than is due"[225].

The verse that Salman is referring to here is:

"Woe to the stinters! Those who, when they take a measure from people, exact full measure, but when they give them a measure or weight, hand over less than is due. Do such people not realise that they will be

220. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 207.
221. See Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 4; Nasai, Janaiz, 3.
222. Isra, 17:14.
223. Ebu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 189.
224. Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* VII, 120/34663.
225. Abdurrazaq, *Musannaf,* II, 372/3750.

raised up on a Terrible Day, the Day mankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds?' (Mutaffifin, 83:1-6).

• "The Bridge of Sirat will be set up. Seeing how fine and razor-sharp it is, the angels will say:

"O Lord. Who will you make to pass along this?" Allah will reply:

"Only those who I wish will pass by it"[226].

• "This community will be destroyed on account of their breaking their promise"[227].

• "On the Day of Judgement those who will have incurred the most sins are those who get carried away by talk that Allah prohibited"[228].

• "One person entered Paradise because of a fly and another went to Hell because of a mere fly".

Two people from past nations once encountered an idol-worshipping people. These people would make whoever came to them sacrifice something to their idols.

They said to one of them who came:

"Sacrifice something" He replied:

"I have nothing with me to sacrifice".

They said:

"Even if it be a fly, sacrifice it". He then killed a fly and sacrificed it to their idols and as a result earned Hellfire. They said to the other:

"Sacrifice something". He replied:

"I do not sacrifice anything to other than Allah". They martyred him and he went to Paradise"[229].

• One time Salman was looking for a clean place to pray. A wise woman said to him:

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226. Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* VII, 59/34195.
227. Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* VII, 543/37817.
228. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 202.
229. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 203.

"First clean your heart and then you can pray wherever you like" Salman liked these words and said to the woman:

"You have spoken wisely"[230].

230. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, I, 206.

4. Qasim ibn Muhammad

(May Allah have mercy on him) [650 - 725(?)]

Qasim ibn Muhammad (May Allah have mercy on him) was the grandson of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). He was born in the 30th year after the hijrah, which corresponds to the year 650 AD. He is the cousin of Zayn al-Abideen, the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Ja'far as-Sadiq is the grandson of Qasim ibn Muhammad.

When Abu Bakr's son, Muhammad, was martyred in Egypt, his son Qasim was left an orphan at 6 years old. His paternal aunt, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him), then raised him[231].

Qasim ibn Muhammad relates the following anecdote from his childhood, which shows his closeness to his aunt:

"On the Day of Arafah, my aunt Aisha would shave our heads and send us to the mosque. The next day she would then make the sacrifice in front of us"[232].

When he was older he would visit her often and learned from her many rulings regarding the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah and the life of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He narrates an anecdote from those days:

"Every morning after leaving my house, I would stop by my aunt Aisha's house. One day when I went to her house she was praying a *nafilah* prayer and was reciting the following verse:

231. Ibn Asakir, *Tarihi Dimashk,* c. 49, p. 164. Cf. *Muwatta'*, Zakat, 10.
232. Ibn Sa'd, V, 187.

“(The people of taqwa will say): But Allah was gracious to us and safeguarded us from the punishment of the searing wind’ (Tur, 52:27)**.**

She was praying whilst in *qiyam*, and weeping and repeating this verse. I waited until I was tired of waiting and then went to the market to purchase some needs. When I returned, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the same position, praying and weeping[233].

His Virtues

Qasim ibn Muhammad was a very trustworthy, scrupulous and pious man. He was a great *faqih* and imam in the religious sciences. He was the most important person of his time and someone whom everyone sought out[234].

Yahya ibn Said (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“We never saw anyone in Madina more virtuous than Qasim ibn Muhammad”[235].

He was a man with strong faith and deep religious knowledge and wisdom. Just like his honourable grandfather, Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him), he was very benevolent, intelligent, careful and serious, resolute and determined in regards to the affairs of the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

This is why Umar ibn Abdulaziz said about him:

“If it were in my hands I would leave the caliphate to Qasim ibn Muhammad”[236].

Qasim ibn Muhammad was a model of nobility and awe. He was always in a state of contemplation and deep reverence. One could see the traces of prostration upon his blessed forehead.

He was filled with love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He liked visiting the blessed grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and being close to him in order to quench the longing

233. Ibn Jawzii, *Sifatu as Safwa,* II, 31.
234. Ibn Sa‘d, V, 193; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 53.
235. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 184.
236. Ibn Jawzii, *Sifatu al Safwa,* I, 351.

and yearning he felt for him. One day he said to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him):

"Dear mother, would you please open for me the room in which the blessed prophet's grave is?"

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) then opened the door that contained those three graves and showed him the grave of the prophet[237].

Qasim ibn Muhammad would never censure anyone nor would he ever speak against them[238].

He was extremely indifferent to the pleasures of this world. In his eyes the world was less important than a mere atom.

This is why he was able to give away 100,000 dirhams, given to him as booty, to the poor, without even touching it. Even in times of financial distress and need he would give away wealth that was given to him. He never accepted anything from anybody[239].

With his superior personality and character, he earned the admiration of all. People would take him as their standard and order their lives according to his model. Qasim ibn Muhammad united both the outer and inner aspects of the religion and transmitted them to the next generations with his state, his words and his model lifestyle. He was a great friend of Allah.

The depth of his knowledge of the hadith sciences

Qasim ibn Muhammad became a select student of the Blessed Companions of Madina. He was one of the leading righteous men and scholars of the generation of the Tabii'een.

Abu al-Zinad, the Madinan *faqih*, said about him:

"I have never seen anyone who knows and applies the Sunnah of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) better than Qasim ibn Muhammad. Study at that time consisted of learning and living the Sunnah"[240].

237. Abu Dawud, Janaiz, 66-68/3220.
238. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 59.
239. Ibn Sa'd, V, 189; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 59.
240. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 184.

Qasim ibn Muhammad benefitted greatly from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) in particular and narrated many hadiths from her. He also benefitted and learned from many great Companions such as Salman Farisi, Abu Hurairah, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with all of them). He was an ocean in the sciences of hadith and tafsir. The masters of the Tabii'een narrated hadith from him.

Qasim ibn Muhammad was very meticulous about narrating hadith word for word and he was a very scrupulous narrator. He narrated only about one hundred hadith for fear of making an incorrect or deficient narration[241].

The scholars of hadith were in complete agreement about the trustworthiness of his narrations.

The depth of his knowledge of fiqh

Qasim ibn Muhammad was a *faqih* who was taught and trained by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the mother of the believers[242].

Qasim ibn Muhammad would arrive at the mosque early in the morning, perform two rakats of prayer, and then he would sit for a long time answering various questions for the people who would gather around him and the people would arrive at the mosque early in order to listen to him talk. He would continue his talk after the 'isha prayer in the evening[243].

The hadith that he related were more related to rulings (*ahkam*). According to **Abdurrahman ibn Abi Amra'**, his mother wished to free a slave but she delayed this until the morning. However she passed away before the morning. Abdurrahman then went to Qasim ibn Muhammad and asked him:

"If I free a slave in place of my mother, would this benefit her (would she receive a reward for it)?"

He gave the following reply:

"Sa'd ibn Ubadah once went to the Messenger of Allah and asked:

"My mother passed away. If I free a slave on her behalf will she benefit?"

241. Ibn Sa'd, V, 187; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 58.
242. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 53.
243. Ibn Sa'd, V, 188, 189.

Allah's Messenger replied: "Yes" (*Muwatta'*, Itk, 13).

His fear of Allah

Qasim ibn Muhammad was a true Friend of Allah, whose heart trembled and whose eyes were always teary from fear of Allah. He was always sorrowful and his head would be bowed down out of his fear of Allah. When he was asked about a matter about which he had no knowledge, he would not hesitate to say: "I do not know" and feared incurring the wrath of Allah by making an incorrect ruling. Whenever he was asked too many questions he would say:

"By Allah we do not know the answer to all of what you ask. If we knew we would not hide it from you and it would not be lawful for us to do so anyway"[244].

He would not make commentary (*tafsir*) on the Qur'an from his own opinions. However he would give a ruling about a clear matter of which he had knowledge saying:

"This is my opinion about this, but I cannot say that it is definitely correct"[245].

His humility

Despite being the greatest scholar of his time, Qasim ibn Muhammad lived a very humble life on account of the depth of his knowledge of Allah (*marifatullah*). One time a man insistently asked him:

"Is Salim more knowledgeable or are you?" He evaded this question, neither praising himself nor saying something in opposition to the truth[246].

He always preferred his brothers over himself and was very selfless. He gave out much charity but never wished for this to be heard or spoken about. When he heard people talking about it he would immediately interrupt and change the subject[247].

244. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 184.
245. Ibn Sa'd, V, 187.
246. Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimashq,* c. 49, s. 172.
247. Ibn Sa'd, V, 189.

His Death

During the last year of his life, the eyes of Qasim ibn Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him) lost their sight and he set out to make the journey for either hajj or umrah. When he reached the site of Qudayd, he fell ill and realising that he was about to die he said to his son:

"Shroud me in what I am wearing now, that is my *izar* and *rida* that I pray in" His son asked:

"Can we not make two layers for your shroud?"

"My son, my grandfather Abu Bakr was also shrouded in three such items of clothing. They are our criteria. The living have more right to and are more worthy of clothing than the dead".

He made a last request that people not praise him after his death[248].

He then prayed as follows:

أَنْتَ رَبِّى وَحِبِّى وَسَيِّدِى

"O Allah! You are my Lord, my Beloved and my Master"[249]. He passed away there a short time after[250].

Some of his wise words

• "One of the greatest sins is to belittle one's sins" [251].

• "I lived with a people (the Blessed Companions) who did not like to speak about what they did not do"[252].

• Qasim ibn Muhammad once heard a man say:

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248. Ibn Sa'd, V, 193; Ibn Jawzii, *Sifatu al Safwa*, I, 352.
249. Abu Ishaq al Huttali, *al-Muhabbetu lillah Subhanahu,* Riyad 1424, p. 21.
250. See Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 184; Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimashq,* c. 49, p. 163.
251. Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimashq,* c. 49, s. 181.
252. *Muwatta'*, Kalam, 24.

"How insolent is such and such towards Allah?" He said to him: "It is not fitting for the sons of Adam to be insolent towards Allah. We can only say about such a person: "How little does he know Allah"[253].

• Qasim ibn Muhammad once saw a man begging at Arafah on the Day of Arafah. He said to him: "Woe to you o begger! Do you ask from other than Allah on such a day?"[254].

• "Almighty Allah bestowed a mercy on people through the different opinions of the Companions. Whichever of the Companions' opinion you take, you will not be distressed"[255].

• "The most fruitful woman is the one who is the least burden financially"[256].

Some of his narrations

• **Qasim ibn Muhammad** narrates:

One time my aunt Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) fell ill. **Ibn Abbas** (may Allah be pleased with him) came to visit her and said:

"O Mother of the Believers! You are going to two great honourable guides and intercessors, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him). (How happy for you, do not worry, be at ease) (Bukhari, Ashabu an-Nabi, 30).

• According to Qasim ibn Muhammad one of the Companions (probably Abdullah ibn Zayd) became blind. His friends came to visit him. However he was not worried about losing his sight. He responded to those who came to console him as follows:

"I wanted those eyes to be able to look at the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Since he is gone, I would not be happy even if I had the most beautiful eyes of a gazelle from Tubale (in Yemen)" (Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad,* no: 533; Ibn Sa'd, II, 313).

253. Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimashq,* c. 49, p. 180.
254. Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu Dimashq*, c. 49, p. 181.
255. Ibn Abdi al Barr, *Jamiu Bayan al Ilmi wa Fadlih,* II, 900; Ibn Sa'd, V, 189.
256. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* V, 58.

• Qasim ibn Muhammad narrates a hadith from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) as follows: One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Do you know who the first people will be to run for shade on the Day of Judgement?"

His Companions replied:

"Allah and His Messenger know best". The prophet said:

"They are those who when their rights were entrusted to them, they accepted, and when a right was asked from them, they generously abided, and when judging amongst the people, they acted as if they were judging for themselves" (Ahmad, VI, 67, 69).

• According to a narration by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him) Qasim ibn Muhammad reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"If a Muslim immediately turns away from looking at a beautiful woman Allah, Most High, will create a state of worship in him in which he will taste spiritual pleasure and joy" (Ahmad, V, 264; Haysami, VIII, 63; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 187).

• Qasim ibn Muhammad transmitted the following statement from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

"The most blessed marriage ceremony is the one that is not financially burdensome". He was asked:

"Did Aisha narrate this from the Messenger of Allah?" Showing his extreme care in these matters he said:

"This is how it was narrated to me and this is how I memorised it" (Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, II, 186).

• Qasim ibn Muhammad said:

"Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked: "There is a person who strives to perform good deeds, but sometimes commits sins. There is another person who does not put much effort into performing good deeds but who also does not sin. Which of these is more superior?" He replied:

"Refraining from sin appears more pleasing to me" (Abu Dawud, *Zuhd,* p. 356).

We should heed this advice today and try to carefully protect ourselves from such hazards which arise from television, the internet, fashion and shopping centres". Repulsion of harm is better than attracting benefit". That is, it is more important and necessary to repulse what is harmful then to try to gain what is of benefit. It is first necessary to remove the puss from a wound and clean it thoroughly, before applying ointment.

This is why it is necessary to first of all protect oneself from what is forbidden and things that will lead to heedlessness of the heart, so that spirituality of one's worship can increase and one can lead an acceptable life of servitude to Allah.

5. Ja’far as-Sadiq

(May Allah have mercy on him) [699 - 765]

Ja’far as-Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in Madina in the 80th year after the hijrah. He was a man whose essence and words were upright and who was given the title ‘Sadiq’ on account of his extreme honesty and trustworthiness.

He was also known by the names ‘*Sabir’* (the patient one), *Fadil* (the virtuous and mature one, of superior character), *Tahir* (pure and clean), and *Atir* (having a beautiful scent).

Ja’far as-Sadiq’s father was Muhammad Bakir and his grandfather was Zayn al-Abideen whose father was Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him) the grandson of the prophet. The lineage of Ja’far Sadiq goes back to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) on his father’s side, and on his mother’s side to Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him). He thus combined the physical and spiritual lineage of both the *ahl al bayt* and of Abu Bakr and brought a unique beauty to the Golden Chain.

From a young age, Ja’far Sadiq was raised in a family and neighbourhood, which had reached the peak of knowledge, worship, virtue and good character. He studied with such Companions as Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) and Sahl ibn Sa’d (may Allah be pleased with him); with the famous Tabii’een scholars Ata, Zuhri, Urwa, Iqrima and Nafi from whom he learned *aqaid* (creed), *tafsir* (commentary on the Qur’an), hadith, and fiqh.

He benefitted greatly in particular from both his honourable grandfathers Zayn al-Abideen and Qasim ibn Muhammad who were great scholars themselves and from his honourable father, Muhammad Bakir. He narrated many hadith from them[257]. All of these individuals were great scholars and leaders (imams) of Madina. May Allah be pleased with all of them.

That is, Ja'far as-Sadiq's teachers, his family and he himself were competent, trustworthy and righteous religious men with sincerity, taqwa, knoweldge of Allah, uprightness, and justice.

In his famous book *Tathkirat al-Awliya*, Fariduddin Attar begins this book, in which he compiled the lives of the Friends of Allah, the lessons we can learn from them, and their wise advice, by narrating the life of Ja'far as-Sadiq for the blessings.

When Qasim ibn Muhammad passed away, his grandson Ja'far as-Sadiq was 28 years old and he had begun to teach the knowledge he had learned to the people[258].

His life of worship

Ja'far as-Sadiq preferred seclusion and would give himself to study and worship. He was a great Friend of Allah, who lived his life in a constant state of worship, abstention and deep reverence.

Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) said about him:

"I would enter the presence of Ja'far as-Sadiq; he was fond of beautiful and subtle words and would always have a smile on his face. Whenever the prophet was mentioned in his presence he would immediately collect himself and he would practically turn pale. I went to him for a long time and I always saw him in one of these three states: He was either praying, fasting or reciting the Qur'an. I never heard him narrate a hadith without having his ablution. He never spoke anything which was of no benefit. He was a worshipper and

257. For the hadith narrated by Jabir, Ibn Abbas and other such Companions, and from Qasim bin Muhammad and other of the *ahl al bayt* see Muslim, Hajj, 147-148; Abu Dawud, Manaiq, 56/1905; Tirmidhi, Hajj 38/862, Manaqib 20/3733; Ibn Maja, Muqaddima 9/65, Tijarat 41/2238; Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, II, 115/7142; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, III, 192, 202-203, 206; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 255.

258. Muhammed Abu Zahra, *al-Imamu as-Sadık,* p. 26.

ascetic whose heart trembled from fear of Allah. Whenever I went to him he would immediately offer me the cushion that he was sitting on..."[259].

Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on him) had the following to say about worship:

"For every person of *taqwa*, *salat* is closeness to Allah. The *hajj* is *jihad* for the weak. Fasting is the zakat of the body. An inviter who has no good deeds to his name is like a person who tries to shoot from his bow without an arrow. As long as you give charity, try to ensure that provision is bestowed upon you abundantly. Protect your wealth by giving zakat. The one who is frugal will never be in need. Taking one's precautions is half of living. To be friends with the people is half of intelligence...The one who grieves his parents will have been rebellious against them. The one who is unable to be patient in the face of calamity and who becomes angry will have deprived themselves of reward...Allah Most High has sent down patience in accordance with calamities, and provision in accordance with need. Allah, Most High, will provide for the one who manages his wealth. However, Allah will deprive the one who wastes his wealth"[260].

❁

Sufyan Sawri (may Allah have mercy on him) narrates**:**

"I went to Mecca to perform Hajj and saw Jafar ibn Muhammad Abtah sitting on his camel. I asked him:

"O son of the Messenger of Allah. Why were the outskirts made the site of *waqf* rather than *Mash'ar al-Haram*?"

He replied:

"The Ka'bah is the House of Allah, the Haram area is like the curtains of the House and the *waqf* place is the gate to the House. When the servant wanted to go to Allah they stop at the gate and supplicate and entreat Him. When they are allowed inside, they are shown a second gate which is Muzdalifah. When He sees that they plead and supplicate even more, and show even extra efforts, He shows them mercy and when He is merciful to them

259. Qadi 'Iyad, *Tartibu al Madariq,* II, 52; Ibn Hajarr, *Tahzibu al Tahzib,* II, 104-105; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid, p*. 76-77.
260. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 194-195; Mizzi, *Tahzibu al Kamal,* V, 89.

He commands them to present their sacrificial animals. When they sacrifice their animals, and cleanse themselves of their impurities and their sins they are commanded to visit the House".

"Well then why is it disliked to fast on the Days of Tashriq?" Ja'far as-Sadiq replied:

"This is because on these days the people are at the Feast of Allah. It is not nice for a guest to fast at their Lord's feast".

"Please tell me, why do the people attach themselves to the cloth that covers the Ka'bah even though it is a useless piece of cloth?"

He replied:

"This is like the one who commits a sin and who then falls at the skirt of the One and revolves around Him in order to have their sin forgiven"[261].

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq explained the truth in the *istiaze* (seeking refuge in Allah from Satan) that we read before reciting the Qu'ran, that is:

أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ:

"(The true) *istiaze* is honouring the Qu'ran by cleansing the mouth of lying, backbiting, and slander of others"[262].

Without a doubt this expression is a typical example of the sensitivity of his heart when it came to worship.

❁

Another time Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The pleasure to be found in the address of Allah, Most High, that is 'O you who believe', removes the fatigue and heaviness of worship and obedience (and turns their worship into a spiritual feast)[263].

261. Dhahabi, *Tarihu al Islam,* IX, 92.
262. Bursawi, *Ruhu al Bayan,* X, 515, [Nahl, 100].
263. Bursawi, *ibid,* II, 185, [Baqara, 183].

His remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) carried a special prosperity and spirituality with it. He said:

"True *dhikr* is that which makes a person forget all *masiwa* (that is everything that distances him from Allah). At that point, Allah, Most High, is above all else"[264].

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq would visit the cemetery at night and say:

"O people of the grave why do you not answer me when I call you?"

Then he would say to himself:

"By Allah, something has come between them and their response. Now it is as if I have become like them and joined them". He would then turn and face the *qibla* and occupy himself with contemplation and worship until the dawn[265].

❁

One day a poor man asked Ja'far as-Sadiq:

"Why do you work day and night?" He replied:

"I saw that nobody else can perform my task as I can, so I decided to do it myself and I threw off laziness. Ever since I was created my provision has come and reached me. This is why I have no ambition nor greed left in me. One day death will come and reach me, and nobody else will die in my place. Thus I began to prepare for death and to meet it. I have seen no loyalty from the people and so I preferred, with all my heart, the loyalty of Allah, Most High, and abandoned everything else. Since they are a mere illusion, I have abandoned them all"[266].

The human being was not created for play and entertainment; he was created to reach Allah, by growing in spirituality. In that case one should lead a fruitful life of worship and not waste the precious capital of life that one has. Does man not know that a leaf falls from the calendar of his life every day? The days and the nights follow each other, the blessings of the dawn and the

264. Fariduddin Attar, *Tadhkiratu al Awliya, p*. 56.
265. Manjibi, *Tasliyatu ahli Masaib,* p. 192-193.
266. Fariduddin Attar, *Ilahiname,* İstanbul 2010, p. 121.

morning pass over the one who is sleeping in heedlessness. Those who spend their lives heedlessly in this way will wake up on the morning of the Day of Judgement with nothing in their hands. The capital of their life will have been used up. The small number of deeds that they performed heedlessly will not be enough to save them.

His beautiful character

Ja'far as-Sadiq was at the peak of mercy, compassion, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and generosity. He did not fear anyone other than Allah. He did not give the slightest importance to those who censured or mocked him. He did not fear the ruler due to his position, nor did he refrain from telling the truth to people due to their large number. The praise of those who praised him did not deceive him, and neither did he turn back from his way when his enemies criticised him.

One day a man who lost his money bag, went to Ja'far as-Sadiq, not knowing who he was and grabbed his collar and said:

"You stole my money". He replied:

"How much money did you have in your bag? "The man replied:

"A thousand dinars"

Without saying a word, Ja'far as-Sadiq took that man to his house and gave him a thousand dinars. When the man later found his bag, he apologised to Ja'far as-Sadiq and returned his money. Ja'far however said:

"We do not take back what we give". The man was shocked and asked:

"Who is this man?" When he learned that he was Ja'far as-Sadiq his embarrassment increased even more[267].

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq had a servant. He would pour water from the urn and Ja'far would wash his hands with it. At one point the water splashed on to his dress. Ja'far looked at his servant a little angrily. The slave then said:

267. Fariduddin Attar, *Tadhkiratu al Awliya,* p. 54; Qushayri, *ar Risala,* II, 384.

"Master, in the Qur'an Allah gives good tidings of forgiveness and Paradise to 'those who control their rage' (وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ)[268]". At that point Ja'far said:

"I have swallowed my anger".

The slave continued to read the rest of the verse.

"–وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ('and pardon other people)'.

"Okay I forgive you".

The slave continued to read the rest of the verse:

"–وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ–: '**(Allah loves the good-doers)'.**

Ja'far then said:

"Go, you are now free for the sake of Allah. Take these 1000 dinars with you"[269].

Ja'far as-Sadiq (my Allah have mercy on him) would show great contentment and submission in the face of misfortunes and calamities that befell him due to the decree of Allah. When his young child passed away in his arms, he did not respond with anything but resignment and contentment with the decree of Allah. Some tears fell from his eyes due to his fatherly compassion. He considered all of the other bounties Allah bestowed upon him and sought refuge in Him as follows:

"You have taken back one of Your bounties but continue to bestow on me numerous other ones. You have tested me once but continue to keep me in good health".

He then took his child to his wife and his other female relatives. When the women saw that the child had died they began to weep and wail. Ja'far warned them to avoid doing so.

268. Al-i Imran, 134.
269. Ibn Jawzii, *Bahru ad Dumu'*, p. 142.

As he went to bury his child, he said the following as an expression of the sincerity of his heart in being at the peak of contentment with the decree of Allah:

"I glorify Almighty Allah who has taken our child. Our love for Him has only increased".

After burying his child he said:

"We are such a people that we pray to Allah that He bestows upon us people and things we love and He bestows them upon us. If He decrees certain things that we do not like for people that we love, then we are content with that"[270].

What a magnificent display of the *adab* of the servant. The secret behind these elevated spirits reaching the peak of spirituality is that they never complained or bemoaned in the face of the weightiest of divine trials but rather turned to Him with an increased contentment, submission, praise, gratitude and love.

His Virtues

Ja'far as-Sadiq was a cheerful and sweet spoken Friend of Allah. Both his character and his face were radiant. He resembled his great grandfather Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). He was extremely dignified and awe-inspiring.

Ja'far as-Sadiq was such a virtuous man in every respect that those who looked at his blessed face could immediately see that he was from the family of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)[271].

His spiritual perfection and superiority was greater than what was said about him. He was called 'Shaykh Bani Hashim', the great leader of the tribe of the Sons of Hashim[272].

It is enough of an expression of his virtue to keep in mind the following truth: All believers invoke peace and blessings upon the prophet, and also

270. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 80.
271. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 193; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 257.
272. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 255.

pray for his *ahl al-bayt* and their later generations. In fact, after the *tahiyyat* in *salat*, if one does not invoke peace and blessings on the prophet and his family, his *salat* is not considered to have been performed correctly.

❁

Ja'far ibn Muhammad was a very generous Friend of Allah. He would feed the poor and give out to the needy. He would give out so much in charity, without fear of poverty for himself, that he would have practically nothing left for his family[273].

In the matter of giving charity in secret and helping those in need he resembled his blessed grandfather Zayn al-Abidin. When night fell, Zayn al-Abidin (may Allah have mercy on him) would go out with his bag of provisions over his shoulder, containing bread, meat and money and leave whatever was needed outside the door of the poor without anyone knowing. This situation only became known after he passed away, and the poor were left without a helper[274].

When the blessed corpse of Zayn al-Abidin was being washed, they found large wounds filled with pus on his back. When they looked for the reason they found that it was from carrying the bags of provision to the poor[275].

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq was very humble. One day Sufyan Sawri saw him wearing a valuable dress. When he said that he did not see it fit for the family of the prophet to be wearing such a garment, Ja'far showed him the dress that he was wearing under it which was made of very harsh wool. After saying that it was more fitting for him to wear the nice clothes that everyone was wearing at that time in which economical means had become plenty, he said:

"I wore the under garment for Allah and the one over it for you. I have hidden the one for Allah and displayed the one for you"[276].

In truth, to wear old clothes in a society of such means, would imply that the one wearing them was feigning asceticism and could even drag them to

273. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 194; Dhahabi, *Tarih,* IX, 89.
274. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 136.
275. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya,* IX, 112, 122.
276. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 193; Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 261-262.

conceit. With this act of his, Ja'far as-Sadiq was protecting himself from hidden dangers such as ostentation (*riya*) arrogance (*'ujb*), conceit (*kibir*) and the pride of modesty in order to become truly humble.

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq was a man of chivalry [*futuwwa*]. One day Shaqiq al-Balkhi asked him what *futuwwa* was and he responded:

"What do you have to say about this matter?"

Shaqiq replied: "If we are given something we are grateful and if we are not then we are patient".

Ja'far as-Sadiq replied:

"Our dogs in Madina do that. For us *futuwwa* is that when we are given something we prefer others over us (by giving it to them) (*i'thar*) and if we are not given anything, then we are grateful"[277].

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq was a Friend of Allah, whose prayers were accepted in His sight. Whenever he asked for something from Allah, he would be granted his request before he even finished making the prayer[278]. Many similar wonders (*karamat*) can be mentioned about him[279]. It was because of this elevatedness of Ja'far as-Sadiq that while he was still alive, some incorrect beliefs, and extreme praise and lies began to be spread about him. These would make him very uncomfortable and he would continue to reject and deny them[280].

One time when Abduljabbar ibn Abbas Hamdani wanted to leave Madina with a group of people, Ja'far as-Sadiq approached them and said:

"By the will of Allah you are from the righteous men of our city. Inform the people of the city that you are going. I distance myself from whoever claims that I am a sinless (ma'sum) imam to whom obedience is compulsory. I am also distant from whoever claims that I do not love Abu Bakr (May Allah

277. Qushayri, *al Risala,* II, 384.
278. Hani, *al-Hadaiq,* p. 129.
279. Hani, *al-Hadaiq,* p. 128-129.
280. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 37, 58.

be happy be with him) and Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and turn away from them[281].

These and other similar narrations support each other and demonstrate the obvious love of Ja'far as-Sadiq and all of the *ahl al bayt* for Abu Bakr and Umar. Any other words attributed to the *ahl al-bayt* are nothing more than great slander. Ja'far as-Sadiq would rebuke the Rafizis and scold them whenever he heard them malign, in secret or openly, his great grandfather Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him)[282].

His humility

Ja'far as-Sadiq was very humble. He never belittled anyone and saw every other believer as being better than him. One day he called his servants to him and said:

"Come and let us make an agreement for the Day of Judgement. Let us promise each other that whoever of us is saved on that Day, let him intercede for the others".

They replied:

"O grandson of the Messenger of Allah! Your grandfather is the intercessor of all of the worlds so what need would someone like you have of our intercession?"

Ja'far as-Sadiq replied with this answer full of humility:

"On that Day, I would be embarrassed to look at my blessed grandfather's face with this bad state of mine and these worthless deeds"[283].

Scholars and ascetics, and in fact all people wished to benefit from Ja'far as-Sadiq. One day Dawud Tai came to him and told him that his heart had hardened and asked him for some advice. Ja'far as-Sadiq replied:

281. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 259, *Tarih,* IX, 90; Mizzi, *ibid,* V, 82.
282. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* VI, 255.
283. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 53.

“You are the most ascetic man of our times, what need do you have of my advice?

Dawud Tai replied:

“O son of the Messenger of Allah! You have superiority over the people. You should be preaching to everyone”.

Ja’far as-Sadiq gave the following answer which showed his fear of Allah and his high degree of humility:

“O Dawud! I fear that on the Day of Judgement my blessed grandfather will grab me by the collar and say: “Why did you not follow me properly? This affair has nothing to do with lineage, but rather to do with observing the rights of Allah”.

Upon that Dawud Tai began to weep saying:

“O my Lord! If a person who is from the lineage of the prophets, whose grandfather is the Messenger of Allah, whose mother is Batul, lives in such fear then who is Dawud to be content with himself and approving of his deeds and his behaviour”[284].

❁

Ja’far as-Sadiq would invite people to be humble and warn them of acting selfishly and becoming arrogant. One day he encountered a tribe of people and asked them:

“Who is your master?” One of them replied:

“I am”.

Ja’far as-Sadiq was not pleased with this reply and he cautioned him saying:

“If you were really the master of these people you would not have claimed to be. (You would have said that you were their servant)”[285].

That is because egotism and selfishness are an obstacle to true masterhood.

284. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 53.
285. Hani, *al Hadaiq,* p 132.

Another one of his sayings about this matter is significant:

"A sin that begins in fear, and then ends in regret will bring the servant closer to Allah. But worship that begins in self-confidence and ends in conceit will distance the servant from Allah. The obedient one who is self-satisfied is in fact a rebel and the rebel who apologises (for his deeds) is in reality obedient"[286].

At no time did Ja'far as-Sadiq ever desire leadership but rather preferred seclusion and silence. The one who delves into the ocean of *marifatullah* does not then desire the shore; that is, the person who has become familiar with Allah gives no importance to the praise of people.

His *taqwa*

Ja'far as-Sadiq used to say:

"There is no provision better than *taqwa*, nothing better than silence, no enemy more dangerous than ignorance, and no illness worse or more serious than deceit"[287].

At the end of the month of Ramadan he used to pray as follows:

"O Allah, Lord of Ramadan, who revealed the Qur'an! This is the month of Ramadan in which He revealed the Qur'an and it is almost over. O Lord I seek refuge in the Noble Being that the dawn does not break and Ramadan leave us before all of my sins are forgiven"[288].

❁

Imam Malik narrates**:**

"I once went for Hajj with Ja'far as-Sadiq. When he was about to pronounce the *talbiyah* his face changed colour and he began to tremble. I asked him:

"What is wrong, o son of the Messenger of Allah?"

"I became like this when I wanted to declare the *talbiyah*"

286. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 55.
287. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 196.
288. Ibn Jawzii, *at-Tabsira*, II, 103.

"So what prevented you from doing so?" I asked. He replied:

"I fear hearing a reply other than "As you wish, my servant"[289].

❁

When we look at the prayers and supplications made by Ja'far as-Sadiq we immediately see his fear of Allah and the high level of *taqwa* he had in his heart. One time he prayed as follows:

"O Allah! Raise me up as long as I obey You and do not disgrace me by allowing me to rebel against You".

"O Allah. Allow me to offer to those whose provision You have limited from the plentiful bounties that You have bestowed upon me". Some righteous men who heard this prayer said:

"This is the prayer of the *ashraf* (the great spiritual men)"[290].

He was at the peak of the physical and spiritual sciences

Ja'far as-Sadiq would run after the Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in order to learn about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked and learned of his unique personality, his blessed life, and his Sunnah from them. We understand this from their narrations in the well-known books on hadith.

Ja'far as-Sadiq was raised in such a blessed family, which was dedicated to acquiring knowledge and which did not withhold any efforts and sacrifices made in attaining it. He dedicated himself to attaining knowledge in the city of Madina, which was the centre of prophetic knowledge. He did not suffice with the knowledge that he learned from his family but rather studied and learned from any of the Blessed Companions that he could find and from the great scholars of the Tabii'een. With the knowledge that he learned, he later became the teacher of many great scholars in both the physical and the spiritual sciences. Many great scholars such as Imam Malik, Sufyan al-Thawri, Sufyan

289. Ibn Jawzii, *at-Tabsira*, II, 142.
290. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 196; Mizzi, *ibid* V, 91.

ibn 'Uyaynah, Abu Hanifa, Ibn Jurayj, Yahya ibn Said and Yahya al-Qattan learned and related many hadith from him[291].

Ja'far as-Sadiq spent his entire blessed life correcting people's beliefs, explaining the shariah, and declaring the truth and reality through his talks and his letters[292].

He stayed away from politics, preferring to occupy himself with learning. He would call those scholars and *faqihs* who did not apply to the sultan for worldly benefits as being the trustworthy heirs of the prophets, guiding mankind[293].

He was the leader of the Muslims, the guide of the people of *marifatullah*, and the most noble of the worshippers (*abid*) and ascetics (*zahid*). He was unparalleled in terms of his understanding of the Qur'an and the mysteries of its commentaries and its nuances[294]. He was a great *muhaddith* and also a *faqih* who had reached the level of being a *mujtahid*. He had a strong power of inspiration and was honest. His ideas and narrations were trusted[295].

All of the scholars and the people of that time were in awe of his knowledge and virtue[296].

Some of his narrations are as follows:

From his father and his grandfather:

"One day the Messenger of Allah took his blessed grandsons Hasan and Hussain by the hand and said:

"Whoever loves me, these two, and their mother and father, will be together with me on the Day of Paradise" (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 20/3733).

❁

The Messenger of Allah used to make the following prayer:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِأُمَّتِى فِى بُكُورِهَا

291. Mustafa Öz, "Jafar as Sadiq", *DİA*, VII, 1.
292. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 63.
293. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 194; Dhahabi, *Tarih,* IX, 92.
294. See Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 51.
295. See. Mustafa Öz, "Ja'far as Sadiq", *DİA*, VII, 1.
296. Dhahabi, *Tarih,* IX, 89-90.

"O Allah! Bless the early hours of this community and the tasks that they perform during these hours" (Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 41/2238).

❁

Ja'far as-Sadiq relates the following hadith which has a chain that reaches back to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him):

"I saw the Messenger of Allah climb the pulpit and give the following sermon.

"O people! We act as if death has been written for other than us. It is as if rights have been made obligatory on other than us. It is as if the deceased that we have made farewell to will come back to us a short time later. We eat up their wealth as if we are going to stay here forever. We have forgotten all counsel. We have begun to see ourselves as safe from all calamities (we see ourselves as safe from misfortune and tribulations).

Happy is the one who is occupied with his own failings and does not concern himself with the faults of others! Happy is the one whose earnings are lawful, whose inner self is pure, whose outer appearance is pleasant and whose path is upright (whose lifestyle is ordered)! Happy is the one who shows complete humility before Allah, who gives out from his wealth without falling into sin, who sits with the people of fiqh and wisdom, who helps the poor and weak! Happy is the one who gives out from his wealth that which is above his need, and who controls his tongue and who embraces the entire Sunnah of the prophet and never returns to innovation (bid'a)".

After saying this, the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) descended the pulpit" (Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, III, 202-203).

❁

When some of the *muhaddithun* (transmitters of hadith) saw the hadith that Ja'far as-Sadiq transmitted from his noble father and blessed forefathers, they said:

"If this chain (*isnad*) of narrators were to be recited and blown over a mad man he would immediately be cured, and come to his senses" (Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 9/65; Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 192).

This is an illustration of how much respect and reverence the scholars of Islam had for the pure and precious family of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). It also indicates the great virtue of his descendants as the mere mentioning of their names is a means for healing.

His comprehension and knowledge of the Qur'an

Reciting the Qur'an is in fact a matter of the heart (in reality the Qur'an is recited with the heart). Whoever is more devoted to Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) will have more knowledge of its mysteries. The greater the degree of one's devotion and fidelity to Allah and His Messenger, the greater one's knowledge of its mysteries increases.

The heart of **Ja'far as-Sadiq** was of such a mould. Consequently his familiarity of the nuances and subtle points of the verses was greater than anyone's.

He was one of the people that Allah praises in the following verse:

"Then We made Our chosen slaves inherit the Book. But some of them wrong themselves; some are ambivalent; and some outdo each other in good by Allah's permission. That is the great favour' (Fatir, 35:32).

He was one of the chosen slaves of Allah and one of the Friends of Allah who raced to do good[297].

One day Ja'far as-Sadiq said:

"If a person says "*Rabbena*" (O our Lord) with complete sincerity five times when he encounters a distressing or dangerous situation, Allah will keep him safe from what he fears and grant him his desire".

He was asked:

"How can this be?" He replied:

"Read the 191st-194th verses from the chapter Al'i Imran if you like"[298].

297. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 63-64.
298. Qurtubi, IV, 318.

Just these few words are enough to illustrate the depth of his knowledge of the Qur'an:

"Worship without repentance is not sound. In the following verse, Allah Most High mentions repentance before worship: **'Those who make tawba, those who worship'** (Tawbah, 9:112)299.

"I wonder at the person who finds something pleasant in themselves and does not say: "مَا شَٓاءَ اللّٰهُ لَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ" (It is as Allah wills, there is no strength but in Allah). Almighty Allah says: **'Why, when you entered your garden, did you not say, "It is as Allah wills, there is no strength but in Allah'?** (Kahf,18:39)"300.

"I wonder at the one who when subject to worry and anguish does not say:

لَٓا اِلٰهَ اِلَّٓا اَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ اِنّٖى كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمٖينَ

'There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers' (Anbiya, 21:87)"301.

"I wonder at the one who when he fears a group of people he does not say: "حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكٖيلُ" (Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians') when Allah Most High says:

'...those to whom the people said, 'The people have gathered against you, so fear them.' But that merely increased their faith and they said, 'Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians' (Al'i Imran, 3:173)"302

His guidance of Imam Azam

Imam Azam Abu Hanifa had connections with Muhammad Bakir and also with his son, Ja'far as-Sadiq.

299. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 56.
300. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 134.
301. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 135.
302. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 134.

Even though they were both of the same age, the scholars consider Ja’far as-Sadiq to be one of Abu Hanifa’s teachers. When talking about Ja’far as-Sadiq, Abu Hanifa would say:

“I swear by Allah that I never saw a person more faqih than Ja’far as-Sadiq”

Another time Imam Azam was asked:

“Who is the most *faqih* person you have ever seen?” He narrated the following hadith:

“I have never seen a person more *faqih* than Ja’far ibn Muhammad. When the Caliph Mansur invited him to Hira he sent word to me:

“O Abu Hanifa! The people have become captivated by Ja’far ibn Muhammad. Prepare the most difficult questions for me to ask him”.

I then prepared forty questions for him. Then the caliph Abu Ja’far Mansur sent word to me and I went to Hira. Ja’far as-Sadiq was sitting on his right. When I saw them both I was overwhelmed more so by the awe of Ja’far as-Sadiq than by that of Mansur. I greeted them. The caliph gave me permission and I sat. The caliph turned to Ja’far as-Sadiq and said:

“O Abu Abdullah, do you know this man?” He replied:

“Yes, he is Abu Hanifa”. Then the caliph turned to me and said:

“O Abu Hanifa! Tell us your questions so that we may ask Abu Abdullah”.

I then presented the questions I had prepared. I was asking, and Ja’far as-Sadiq was answering.

“He was saying: “You say such and such about this matter, the people of Madina say such and such, however we say ‘such and such...” Sometimes he would follow our opinion, sometimes the opinion of the people of Madina, and sometimes he would oppose them both. He answered all forty questions in great detail, and did not leave one unanswered.

Did we not say that "*the most knowledgeable of people is the one who knows the contentious issues the most*" (And so Ja'far as-Sadiq is a scholar who knows best the contentions between different matters of knowledge)"[303].

Abu Hanifa went to Madina to stay with Ja'far as-Sadiq for two years and learned much from him. When Ja'far as-Sadiq went to Iraq they also met with each other. The following saying of Abu Hanifa is in regard to those meetings:

"If it were not for those two years, Numan would have been ruined"[304].

In different meetings, Ja'far as-Sadiq taught Abu Hanifa certain principles considered to be very fine points and sensitive matters that could easily be considered deception if one did not know better[305].

This is why Abu Hanifa relates many things from Ja'far as-Sadiq. When we look at the books called '*Asar'* of Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, we find many such narrations"[306].

His death

Ja'far as-Sadiq spent his entire blessed life in the enlightened city of Madina, the land of knowledge. It was there that he passed away 148 years after the hijrah, in the year 765AD. He left a last testament before he passed away: *Salat*...

Just like the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), at his last breath he insisted upon being careful about *salat*. After giving advice about continuing to perform *salat* in a manner of which it is worthy, that is, in accordance with all of its pre-requisites and conditions (*ta'dil'i arkan*) and with *khushu*, he was reunited with the mercy of his Lord[307].

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303. Dhahabi, *Tarihu al Islam,* IX, 89-90; Mizzi, ibid, V, 79-80; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Abu Hanifa,* p. 90; Makki, *Manaqib Abu Hanifa*.
304. Alusi, *Sabbu al Azab ala Man Sabbu al Ashab,* p. 157; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *al Imamu as Sadiq,* p. 37-39, 254.
305. See Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 196; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 130.
306. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 38, 253-254.
307. Muhammad Abu Zahra, *ibid,* p. 63-64.

He was buried at the Jannat'al Baqi cemetery next to his father Muhammad Bakir, his grandfather Zayn al-Abideen and Hasan, the uncle of his grandfather (may Allah be pleased with them both)[308].

May Allah allow him to intercede for us .

His words of wisdom

• Ja'far as-Sadiq was once asked: "What has happened to us that we pray but our prayers are not answered?"

He replied:

"This is because you are praying to a Being about whom you have no knowledge"[309].

(That is, you have distanced yourselves from an acceptable servitude. That is you stay far away, you do not have *taqwa*, you do not abide by the command 'to remember your Lord much', you do not recognise Him as He deserves to be known with your states and your lifestyles, and you cannot reach *marifatullah*. So because you are praying with an empty heart, your prayers are not accepted).

• "The person who lives in the outward form of the Messenger of Allah is a S*unni*. The person who lives in both the *zahir* (the outer) and the inner form (*batin*) is a Sufi".

By the term '*batin'* Ja'far as-Sadiq was indicating the Messenger of Allah's pure and beautiful character and his preference for the hereafter[310].

• "Good deeds only reach perfection with the following three things:

- One acts immediately, without hesitation, once one has made one's decision,

- To see the deed that one does as being small and to keep oneself distant from egoism,

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308. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain Silsile,* p. 48.
309. Qushayri, *al Risala,* II, 424-425; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 130.
310. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* I, 20.

- To perform it in secret in order to be wary of showing off"[311].

• One day a fly settled down on the face of the caliph, Mansur. However much he tried to brush it away he was unsuccessful in keeping it distant. At that point Ja'far as-Sadiq came and Mansur asked him:

"O Imam! Why did Allah Most High create flies?"

Ja'far as-Sadiq replied:

"In order to bring low the oppressor"*[312]*.

• Be wary of befriending five types of people:

1) The liar, because as long as you are with him, you will be deceived. He is like a mirage. He will show you to be near that which is distant, and to be distant that which is near.

2) The fool, because even when he tries to benefit you, he will harm you unknowingly.

3) The selfish man because he will deprive you of that which you are most needy of.

4) The coward, because he will deliver you to another and flee you in your time of difficulty.

5) The sinner, because he will sell you for a bite or even less.

When asked what is less than a bite Ja'far as-Sadq replied:

"To be greedy for a bite and then to not be able to eat it"[313].

In another narration he added:

"Also do not befriend the one who does not abide by the ties of kinship (*sila-i rahim*)! I saw him being cursed in three places in the Book of Allah"[314].

• "Friendship only arises out of its own measures. Whenever you see a person who has one or some of these traits then accept this to be a sign of true friendship:

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311. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 198.
312. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 198; ibn Jawzii, *Sifatu al Safwa,* I, 392.
313. Ghazzali, *Ihya*, II, 172.
314. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 183-184; Ibn Asakir, *Tarihu al Dimashq,* c. 41, p. 409.

- The first measure is that they are sincere towards you, of their own will,

- The second is that they take on your distress as if it were their own and they see your goodness and your beauty as if it were their own,

- The third is that wealth and position do not change them,

- The fourth is that they do not envy you of anything,

- The fifth is that they gather in themselves all of these virtues (and that is that they do not abandon you during a calamity)"[315].

• "Allah has hidden three things in three other things:

1) He has hidden **His pleasure** (*rida*) in obedience to Him. So never belittle anything that is in obedience to Him; maybe His pleasure is in that very thing.

2) He has hidden **His wrath** (*ghadab*) in sins. So never belittle any sin; maybe His wrath is hidden there".

3) He has hidden **His friends (*awliya*)** amongst the believing slaves. So never despise any believer for he may well be a true friend of Allah, Most High"[316].

He then added the following:

"He has also hidden the acceptance of a prayer in the prayers that are made to Him. So never give up (any) prayer; it may be that that it is the one He will answer"[317].

• "I would never regret forgiving anyone. Even if this act of forgiveness has caused me harm, forgiving is more pleasing to me than regretting a thousand times a punishment I have given someone"[318].

• "Allah, Most High, revealed to the world: "O world! Serve the one who serves Me! And tire and wear out the one who serves you"[319].

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315. Safadi, *al Wafi bi al Wafayat,* Beirut 1420, XI, 100.
316. Abu Talib Makki, *Qutu al Qulub,* I, 347; Ghazzali, *Ihya,* IV, 49.
317. Ghazzali, *Ihya*, IV, 49.
318. Ibn Abdilbarr, *Adabu al Mujalasa*, p. 116.
319. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 194.

• "When an unpleasant word from your brother (in religion) reaches you, do not be sad! If it really were as he said, this unpleasant word will be atonement for the punishment you would have received in the hereafter. That is, that punishment will be given to you whilst still in this world. If it is not as he said, then you will have gained a reward without having done anything"[320].

• It is reported that **Sufyan Sawri** said:

"One time I went to Ja'far as-Sadiq and said:

"O blessed grandson of the Messenger of Allah. Give me some advice". He replied:

"O Sufyan!

- There is no courage in a liar,

- An envious person will never be at ease,

- The miser has no friend,

- A person without feeling has no brotherhood,

- A person with bad character cannot be a good Muslim.

I said to him:

"O blessed grandson of the Messenger of Allah, give me some more advice" He replied:

"O Sufyan!

- Refrain from the unlawful and you will become an *abid* (a worshipper).

- Be content with what Allah has decreed for you and you will be a Muslim (one who submits wholeheartedly to Allah).

- In whatever way you want people to be your sincere friends, then you be sincere to them in the same way and then you will be a true believer".

- Do not keep company with the sinners or they will teach you their evil ways. There is a hadith that says: "*A person is upon the religion of his friend so be careful whom you befriend*"[321].

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320. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 198.
321. Abu Dawud, Adab, 16/4833.

- Consult in your affairs with righteous people who have *taqwa* of Allah". I asked him again:

"O blessed grandson of the Messenger of Allah! Give me some more advice. He replied:

"My father raised me upon three things.

He said to me:

-"My son! One who is friends with a bad person cannot be in peace".

- One who frequents evil places will be under offence.

- One who cannot control his tongue will feel regret"[322].

• "Anger is the key to all evil"[323].

• "There is no good in the one who is not concerned with working to meet his needs. The good person is the one who earns his livelihood without depending on others and who pays his debts from it and who keeps ties with his relatives"[324].

• "The best of the servants is the one who has the following five virtues:

1) He is happy when he does good,

2) He repents (seeks forgiveness) when he does evil,

3) He is grateful when he is given a bounty,

4) He is patient when he meets with misfortune,

5) He forgives when he is wronged"[325].

• Ja'far as-Sadiq was once asked:

"Why did Allah Most High forbid usury?" He replied:

"So that people will not deprive each other of offering and helping each other"[326].

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322. Ibn Hajar al Haytami, *az Zawajir*, I, 28; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 130-131.
323. Ghazzali, *Ihya,* III, 166.
324. Ibn Shamsu al Khilafa, *al Adabu an Nafa,* p. 4.
325. Ibn Shamsu al Khilafa, *ibid*, p. 14.
326. Dhahabi, *Tarihu al Islam,* IX, 92.

• "If you commit a sin, seek forgiveness for it immediately! Do not persist in the sin"[327].

• "Let the one whose provision has become straitened increase his *istighfar*"[328].

• "When you hear something unpleasant about your believing brother, seek out seventy excuses for him. If you can find no excuse, then say: "Maybe he has an excuse that I am not aware of" and then close the matter"[329].

• "Whoever struggles against his *nafs* for his *nafs*, he will

find wonders (*karamat*). Whoever strives against his *nafs* for the sake of Allah Most High, he will reach Allah"[330].

• "A little of the following four things are excessive: fire, enemies, poverty, and illness".

His last testament to his son

Ja'far as-Sadiq gave the following wise advice to his son Musa Qasim:

"My dearest child! Listen well to my last testament and take heed of my words. If you heed my words carefully, you will live happily and peacefully and you will die in a state of gratitude.

My son! The one who is content with what Allah has meted out, will be wealthy, whilst the one who covets what is with another will be greedy and die with a poor heart. The one who belittles his own sins, will see the minor sins of another as being great. The one who belittles the sins of others will see his own sins as being major.

My son! The one who seeks out and discloses another's' faults will have the faults in his own home revealed. The one who takes the sword of rebellion out of his own sheath will cut himself with that sword. The one who digs a pit for his brother will fall into that pit himself. The one who sits with dissolute

327. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 130.
328. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 131.
329. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 132.
330. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 56.

and debauched people will be disgraced. The one who sits with scholars will be shown respect. The one who frequents evil places will meet with offence.

My son! Beware of harming another's reputation. Otherwise your reputation will also be harmed. Stay away from matters that do not concern you otherwise you will be disgraced.

My son! Speak the truth, whether it is for you or against you. If you do this your renown amongst the people will increase.

My son! Read the Book of Allah, spread peace, command good and dissuade from evil, go to the one who does not come to you, speak to the one who does not speak to you, and give to the one who asks. Beware of spreading rumours because spreading rumours sows the seeds of animosity in people's hearts. Beware of concerning yourself with the faults of others. The one who concerns himself with the faults of others will become their target..."

My son! When you want to visit someone visit righteous and good people. Do not visit sinners because they are like hardened rocks from which water does not spring, and dried trees which have no leaves, and barren deserts in which grass does not grow".

Throughout his entire life Musa Qasim listened to and followed to the letter, this last testament of his noble father, Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah have mercy on him)[331].

331. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* III, 195-196; Ismail ibn Muhammad, *Siyaru as Salaf as Salihin,* p. 723-724.

6. Bayazid Bistami

(May Allah have mercy on him) [777 - 848]

Abu Yazid Tayfur ibn Isa (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in Bistam[332] in the hijri year 161 (777AD). His father Isa was a very religious and righteous man. His mother was a righteous and chaste woman, with very good character, modesty, humbleness and a devout worshipper. She would pray much and her tender heart would tremble with fear of Allah. She would be ever content with the decree of Allah in the face of the changing conditions and surprises, both bitter and sweet and her every state was a struggle to gain the pleasure of Allah[333].

The extraordinary states of Bayazid began even before he was born. Whenever his mother would put something of doubtful origins in her mouth, the baby would start to kick and continue to do so until she removed the bite from her mouth[334].

It is said that Bayazid Bistami benefitted from Imam Ali Riza, the grandson of Ja'far as-Sadiq[335].

Bayazid Bistami was a true Lover of Allah, who had delved into the ocean of divine love. He would constantly keep his body in a state of struggle and his heart ever in a state of witnessing. He was familiar with the fine and profound meanings on the way of tasawwuf[336]. This is why he was given the

332. Bistam is a town established in Iran, between Tahran and Mashhad, İran'da, in the hills north of Sahrud Shahri which is 410 km from Tahran.
333. Saglaqhi, *an Nur,* p. 63.
334. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 171; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 324.
335. Najmaddin ibn Muhammad, *Hulasatu al Mawahib,* p. 109; Kawthari, *Irghamu al Marid,* p. 31.
336. Attar, *Tadhkira* p. 171.

titles of Sultan al-Arifin, Sayyid Arifan and Pir Bistam. In order to praise other *awliya* of later times people would use the term 'The Bayazid of our century' and this is enough to indicate his spiritual rank.

Some people have made certain accusations against him because they do not understand his words in regards to the science of tawheed and truth (*haqiqah*) and have even attributed many incorrect ideas to him. We should give no importance to these accusations[337].

His pure youth

Whilst Bayazid was still a child, he displayed signs that he would be a great Friend of Allah in the future. His every state and act was measured, his words were filled with wisdom, his look was profound and meaningful, and his face radiant.

When Shaqia al-Balkhi, one of the famous men of tasawwuf of that time, was setting out to go to hajj, he stopped over at Bistam and immediately noticed Bayazid playing amongst the other children near the mosque. As Shaqiq was giving his sermon in the mosque, the young child, Bayazid came and listened to him, with pure manners. This state of Bayazid did not skip the attention of Shaqiq and in a display of foresight he said:

"This child will be one of the brave men of spirituality in the future"[338].

Bayazid Bistami began to read the Qur'an at a very young age. When he came across the following verse:

'You who are enwrapped in your clothing! Stay up at night (perform salat) except a little'[339], he asked his father:

"Father dear, who is Allah addressing here?" His father replied:

"My dearest son, Allah is indicating the Messenger of Allah here. Later in the chapter Ta'ha, our Lord alleviated this ruling a little".

337. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 311-312.
338. Sahlaqhi, *ibid* p. 123.
339. Muzzammil, 1-2.

As Bayazid continued to read he came across the verse:

'Your Lord knows that you stay up nearly two-thirds of the night – or half of it, or a third of it – and a group of those with you. Allah determines the night and day'[340].

He asked his father:

"Dear father. I hear a verse mentioning a group of people who wake up to worship at night".

His father said:

"Yes, my dear they are the Companions of the Messenger of Allah".

Bayazid then said:

"Dear father, what good can come from abandoning a practice of the Messenger of Allah and his Companions?"

From that day on his father began to spend his nights in worship. One night Bayazid awoke and said:

"Dear father, teach me how to pray so that I can pray with you".

His father said:

"Go back to sleep, you are still young". Bayazid gave the following response:

"Dear father, when the people spring out of their graves on the Day of Judgement to see their deeds and enter the Divine presence in groups,[341] my Lord will say to me:

"O my slave! What deed did you do whilst in the world?" and I will say:

"O my Lord. I said to my father: "Teach me how to pray so that I can pray with you". But my father said: "Go back to sleep, you are still young".

His father then said:

"By Allah, I would not want you to say something like that".

340. Muzzammil, 20.
341. See Zilzal, 6.

He then taught his son how to pray. From that time on, at a young age, Bayazid would awake at night, and perform the prayer"[342].

❁

His mother had sent him to the *maktab* (religious school) and when he came across the verse, '**'Give thanks to Me and to your parents**', Bayazid asked his teacher to explain this verse.

The commentary his teacher made deeply affected him. He left his pen and book and, after asking permission, ran home and threw himself into the arms of his mother. He was crying and pleading:

"Please dearest mother". His mother was shocked and asked him:

"What is the matter son?"

Bayazid replied:

"Nothing is the matter but today I heard a verse from the Qur'an in which Allah, Most High, wants me to serve both you and Him. I was deeply moved. How can I serve in two homes? Will I have the strength for this? What if I lack in my service?"

Dearest mother, pray to Allah that I can spend all of my time serving you or consecrate me to Him so that I can worship Him always".

His mother was very pleased with this state of her son and said:

"My son, I have consecrated you to Allah and give up my own rights upon you"[343].

❁

One day when one hadith scholar saw the young Bayazid, he was pleased with his state and wanted to test his intelligence and understanding so he asked him:

"Beautiful child! Do you know how to pray properly?"

Bayazid replied:

"Yes, I know as much as Allah wills"

342. Safiri, *al Majalisu al Wa'ziyya,* II, 293.
343. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 172.

He was asked:

"How?"

Bayazid replied:

"I enter his presence with the understanding that "Here I am o my Lord, to bring about Your command, then I pronounce the *takbir*, "Allahu Akbar"; I then recite slowly and carefully from the Qur'an in accordance with its rules and rulings; I bow down in reverence; then prostrate in humility; then I give my farewells by giving the salam".

That man was in awe and said:

"O intelligent child! Why do you allow people to come and pat you on the head when you have such a deep understanding?"

That man assumed that the people's compliments and recognition would cause Bayazid to become arrogant and he did not think that he should allow the possibility for this to happen.

However, the young Bayazid gave the following reply full of wisdom:

"In reality, they are not patting me on the head they are rubbing the beauty that Allah, Most High, has adorned me with. How can I prevent them from touching something which is not mine?"[344]

Just as in this example, this is one of the manners of the true servant that the heart needs to attain, that is, to see all beauty as coming from Allah and never attribute it to one's own self.

His devotion to the Sunnah

The path to advance in the way to Allah is only through obedience to His rulings, to abide by the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), and to follow with great care and meticulousness, the model state, character and behaviour of the Friends of Allah. Moreover, just like all true Friends, Bayazid Bistami strived in great enthusiasm to apply the Sunnah in his life. He did not compromise it in the least.

344. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 99.

One day, he set out with his students to see a man who was famous amongst the people for being a *wali* of Allah. As that man left his house and went to the mosque, he spat in the direction of the Ka'bah. Bayazid was very affected by the raw and lax state of that man and he returned home without even greeting him. He said to his students:

"This man is not even trustworthy in the matter of abiding by the manners that the Messenger of Allah taught us. How can he then be trustworthy in the matter of the mysteries of Allah?"[345]

❁

The following words of Bayazid Bistami are sufficient to demonstrate just how dedicated he was to the Sunnah:

"I thought of asking Allah, Most High, to free me from the needs of eating and drinking and having a wife, but then I said to myself:

"How can it be permissible for me to ask for such a thing from Allah Most High? The Messenger of Allah never asked for such a thing" and then I gave up this idea"[346].

❁

Bayazid would measure his every state against the state of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). The prophet was for him a complete criterion of action. One of his important pieces of advice was as follows:

"Whoever claims to be a true Sufi and then abandons recitation of the Qur'an and a life of asceticism, does not continue with the congregation, does not participate in the funeral prayer, and does not visit the ill, know that he is a patent innovator"[347].

❁

One day Bayazid Bistami was walking along the road and a youth was following him by stepping in his every step. The shaykh had a fur coat on him. The youth said:

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345. Qushayri, *Risala*, p. 57, 416-417.
346. Qushayri, *ibid,* p. 57; Munawi, *Fayzu al Qadir,* VI, 108.
347. Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* III, 305; Ibn Jawzii, *Talbisu Iblis,* p. 151.

"O my master, can you give us a piece of your fur so that I can benefit from your blessings and your prosperity". The Master gave him the following reply:

"Even if you wear the skin of Bayazid, not just the fur, you will not benefit from it without performing the deeds that he does"[348].

His struggle against his *nafs*

In a metaphorical summary of the stages of his spiritual life, Bayazid stated the following:

"For twelve years I was the forger of my *nafs*. I placed it in the bellows of asceticism and burned it with the fire of struggle. I put it in the loom of censure and struck it with the hammer of reproach and humility. Then I acted as a mirror to my *nafs* for five years. That is, I watched over it. I polished this mirror with all manner of worship and obedience. Then I looked at it with the eye of taking heed for a year and I saw that within my spirit was a great addiction to pride and trusting in my worship, and being satisfied with my deeds. I struggled for five more years in order to be rid of this calamity, and finally I reached the stage of perfect faith and I was reunited with the spiritual pleasure of Islam"[349].

❁

Another saying of Bayazid is as follows:

"I have treated and cured all illnesses but I have never seen such a difficult thing to treat as my *nafs*. Whereas there was nothing more simple and more worthless than my nafs"[350].

"I invited my *nafs* to a journey to the Divine but it resisted and caused problems. I then eliminated all of its worldly desires and then directed it towards the presence of Almighty Allah"[351].

❁

348. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 191.
349. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 174; Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 97.
350. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* X, 36.
351. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* X, 36.

In short, in order to reach Allah, one needs to put aside the desires of the nafs and scale the steep cliff of egoism. In order for the believer to protect himself from spiritual misfortunes such as pride, arrogance, greed, and anger, which are manifestations of the ego and the *nafs*, is depended on him perceiving that he is in essence 'nothing and non-existent'. It is then very easy for those who have reached this state of the heart, to silence the rebellious wailing of the *nafs* in the face of pain and struggle and concentrate on the wisdom in these trials.

One day when Bayazid was walking in the street some ash fell on him by mistake. He was sullied all over but did not show the slightest sign of anger. On the contrary he thanked Allah and wiped his face. Having observed the wisdom in this event he said:

"In reality I am deserving of the fire but out of the grace of Allah, He poured ashes over me rather than fire, thus spiritually cautioning me. So what is there to be sad or angry about?"[352].

His fear of Allah and his life of *taqwa*

When Bayazid performed *dhikr* of Allah he did so in a state of ecstasy and rapture. His bones could be heard creaking when he prayed. This state was a result of his awe of Allah and the devotion he felt to the divine commands[353].

Even when he was alone he would sit on his knees in the knowledge that he was always in the presence of Allah Most High[354]. He would say:

"For thirty years as I have prayed, I have felt like a wretched man who has not managed to properly annihilate the desires of his *nafs*"[355].

❁

One day a person came to him and said:

352. Sadi, *Bostan*, Tahran 1368, p. 183.
353. Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 183.
354. Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 325.
355. Qushayri, *ibid* p. 58.

"Teach me something that will be a means for my salvation" Bayazid said to him:

"Keep these two sentences in mind; these will be sufficient knowledge for you:

1) Allah Most High is closer to you than your jugular vein and He sees and knows everything (In that case, know that you are constantly under the watch of a divine camera).

2) Allah Most High has no need of your deeds (On the contrary, try to perform righteous deeds being aware that you are in need of Him)"[356].

❁

One day Bayazid was going to the mosque. It was raining and the roads were muddy. His foot slipped and he grabbed on to a wall in order not to fall. He dirtied the wall in the process. Then he thought to himself:

"There is still some time before the *adhan* is called. I should first go to the owner of this wall and ask him to forgive me (for dirtying it)".

He went and found the owner of the wall. The man was a Zoroastrian. He explained what happened and asked him to forgive him. The Zoroastrian asked him in surprise:

"Does your religion command you to be so careful and cautious?" Bayazid said "Yes" and the man said:

"In that case I too believe in Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad Mustafa".

As a result of the blessings of this beautiful act of Bayazid, all of the people in that household became Muslim[357].

Bayazid would never lean against any wall that was not from the masjid or a tekke. He would say:

356. Attar, *Tadhkira, p.* 191.
357. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 93-94; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 334.

"Allah, Most High, will take each atom to account. To (lean against that wall and harm it) is a right that will be taken into consideration, since each atom will be taken to account"[358].

No one ever saw Bayazid not in a state of fasting except on the days of *eid*. He returned to Allah while in this state. There are many other similar examples that are transmitted about his virtues[359].

His life of zuhd

According to Bayazid the *zahid* was not one who did not possess any wealth or property. Rather the true *zahid* was the one who did not attribute his wealth and property to himself, living in awareness that in reality he was not the possessor of anything and who did not enslave his heart to fleeting objects[360].

A believer, who possesses wealth as a result of lawful earnings, is an acceptable servant in the sight of Allah. Such servants always say: "Property and wealth is Allah's, we all belong to Him and we are only trustees".

With this awareness they give out in the way of Allah of everything that they possess. Their hearts are not caught up by the deceiving toys of this fleeting world and they protect their hearts from becoming vaults of worldly fortune.

The following words nicely summarise the attitude of Bayazid to this world:

"What worth has the world that we need to talk of abstaining from it!?[361]

"This world is deception upon deception for the people who love it. The hereafter is joy upon joy for the people who love it. Love of Allah is bliss from light, and light upon light"[362].

Bayazid lists the characteristics of those who prefer this world and those who prefer the hereafter:

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358. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 176.
359. Serraj *Luma'*, p. 385.
360. See Abu Talib Makki, *Qutu al Qulub*, I, 447.
361. Abbas, *Abu Yazid*, p. 90.
362. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 124; Hani *al-Hadaiq*, p. 322.

For the one who prefers this world over the next:

- His ignorance is more than his knowledge,

- His heedlessness is more than his remembrance of Allah,

- His sins are more than his good deeds.

For the righteous person who prefers the hereafter over this world:

- His silence is greater than his speech,

- His poverty is greater than his wealth (that is, his contentment is greater than his greed),

- His anxiety about his last breath is greater than his happiness. Love reigns in his heart. He finds mystery in the station of closeness. His *nafs* is devoted to service. His heart is upon the direction of *taqwa* and seeking Allah's pleasure. His spirit finds peace in *suhbah*"[363].

Bayazid said that he reached true asceticism in three stages: "In the first stage, I became a *zahid* and removed from my heart, love of the world and everything in it. In the second stage, I removed from my heart love of the hereafter and everything in it, and then in the third stage, I removed from my heart love for everything other than Allah"[364].

He also said:

"When I went for my first pilgrimage, I only saw the Ka'bah. When I went a second time I saw the Ka'bah and the Lord of the Ka'bah. On my third visit I only saw the Lord of the Ka'bah"[365].

Bayazid stated the importance of eating little in order to protect the heart from love of this world and in order to mature spiritually. He said:

"Hunger is like a cloud. When a person eats little, his heart begins to pour down the rains of wisdom"[366].

363. Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 86; Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 125.
364. Qushayri, *ibid,* p. 58.
365. Hujwiri, *Kashfu al Mahjub,* p. 319.
366. Attar, *Tadhkira, p.* 198; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 319.

His attitude towards creation through the Eyes of His Creator

Bayazid Bistami, the sultan of gnostics, said that showing disrespect towards one's brothers in religion, and belittling them causes great harm to one's spiritual life[367]. He said:

"A person who looks at people as if they were common, that is who belittles and disdains them will end up hating them. But one who looks at them through the eyes of the Creator will have mercy on them"[368].

❁

One time a man came to Bayazid Bistami and asked him:

"With what did you reach this rank?" He gave the following reply:

"Forget this claim of position, however, Almighty Allah bestowed upon me these eight traits:

1) I see myself behind others and the people in front of me (humility).

2) Due to my compassion for His creatures I am content to burn in Hell in their place (endless compassion).

3) My constant aim in life is to ease the heart of a believer (Selflessness, altruism and preferring one's brother in religion over oneself).

4) I never save anything from today for tomorrow (charity, generosity, reliance upon Allah).

5) I desire the mercy of Allah, Most High, not for myself but for others (the ultimate manifestation in the servant of the attribute of al-Rahman (the Most Merciful).

6) I strive with all my might to please the believers and rid them of the sorrow in their hearts (to be with the lonely, the abandoned and the grieving).

7) Due to my compassion I am always the first to greet a believer I meet (greeting with peace (salam), praying for one's brother in religion, wishing good for them, pleasing them and being a means to love).

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367. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 194; Hani *al-Hadaiq,* p. 331.
368. Sahlaghi, *ibid* p. 109.

8) I came to the following decision: If on the Day of Judgement, Allah, Most High, gives me the right to intercede for others, then I will intercede for those who caused me pain and harm, and then those who were good to me"[369].

Hallaj-i Mansur also prayed for those who stoned him as follows:

"O my Lord, they do not know the truth, forgive them before you forgive me".

❁

Bayazid Bistami's compassion and mercy towards the creation on behalf of their Creator was so broad and deep that he saw their pain as his own. One time he saw a donkey which had been beaten badly. It was lying in a pool of blood. Bayazid was so affected that blood began to seep out from his own body[370].

This state is undoubtedly the peak in looking at the creation through the merciful 'eyes' of the Creator.

❁

Whilst on his travels somewhere, Bayazid Bistami stopped under a tree to eat something. He then continued on his way. After travelling for a good time, he saw an ant in his bag and said:

"I have separated this creature of Allah from his home" and he returned to where he was and put the ant back[371].

❁

Another time Bayazid was travelling with his students through a narrow passage when a dog appeared before them. That sultan of gnostics moved back and gave the dog room to pass through. One of his students said to himself:

"How strange a state of Bayazid that he gives way to a dog when Allah, Most High, has ennobled the human being (has made him superior and worthy of respect)".

Bayazid realised what he was thinking and explained:

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369. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 88-89; Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 97.
370. Ali ibn Husayin Safi, *Rashahat Aynu Hayat,* p. 487.
371. See Qushayri, *ibid,* p. 229; Sadi, *Bostan*, p. 78.

"Such a thing occurred to my heart that it was as if the dog said to me with its tongue of disposition: "What was my fault that they clothed me with the fur of a dog before time. What did you do to deserve to wear the honourable robe of 'The Sultan of Gnostics'? What is the mystery in this?" That is why I allowed him to pass"[372].

❁

In short, a believer should contemplate whenever they see any creature of Allah, saying: "I could have been in their place and they could have been in mine". Thus their gratitude to Almighty Allah or His amazing grace, goodness and bounties should increase. The Holy Qur'an states:

"And He has made everything in the heavens and everything on the earth subservient to you. It is all from Him. There are certainly Signs in that for people who reflect" (Jathiyya, 45:13).

What befalls the slave is to be in a state of praise (*hamd*), gratitude (*shukr*) and remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) until one's last breath.

The real *karamah* is *istiqama*

Even though many marvels (*karamat*) were narrated about him, Bayazid Bistami (may Allah have mercy on him) gave great importance to *istiqama* (uprightness and integrity) and would say:

"Do not be immediately deceived by one who has been given much *karamat* and who may even sit before you cross-legged and float in the air. Look to whether they abide by the divine commandments and prohibitions, preserve the divine limits and follow properly the rulings of the sharia"[373].

The extraordinary phenomena displayed by people who do not abide by the divine rulings are not *karamat,* but rather *istidraj*[374].

One day someone said to Bayazid Bistami:

"They say that you walk on water".

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372. Attar, *Tadhkira, p.* 179.
373. Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* III, 304; Qushayri, *ibid*, p. 58.
374. *İstidraj* are extraordinary powers that cause a sinners' deception by themselves hence resulting in complete failure in the hereafter (Translator's note).

He replied:

"A stick also walks on water".

"They say that you fly in the air".

"Birds also fly in the air".

"They say that you go to the Ka'bah in one night".

"A jinn or a devil can also go from India to Damavand in one night".

"In that case then what is the affair of the people of the heart?"

"To devote their hearts to none other than Allah, Most High"*[375]*.

In reality, the most important thing in the life of a servant is not to be able to work wonders but to reach Allah. This is why the true friends of Allah did not give any importance to physical *karamat* and did not approve of focusing on but rather concentrated all of their efforts on maintaining their integrity and uprightness, which is the real *karamah*.

It is said that Bayazid Bistami once said:

"One day I was going to pass over to the other side of the Tigris. The two banks of the river came together to allow me to pass. I immediately collected myself and said to the Tigris:

"I swear by Allah that I will not be deceived by this. Boatmen take people across the river for half a coin (But you are now asking from me all of my good deeds that I have prepared for thirty years for the Day of Judgement. In that case I will not waste thirty years of my life for half a coin. What I need is the *al-Karim* (the Generous One), not *karamah*"[376].

Marifatullah (Knowledge of Allah)

One time Bayazid Bistami was asked:

"What is the sign of a gnostic?" He replied:

375. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 201; Sarraj, p. 316; Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 98.
376. Attar, *Tadhkira, p*. 186.

"That he does not give pause to his remembrance of Allah[377], that he does not tire of giving Him His rights and that he does not become familiar with any other than Him"[378].

Another time he said:

"Happy is the one who has only worry (he is in a constant state of remembrance of the one and only Allah). His heart is not preoccupied with the vain things his eyes see and his ears hear. Whoever attains the mystery of *marifatullah* will turn his face away from everything that distracts him from Allah"[379].

According to him the gnostic is with Allah even while he is sleeping, and is constantly striving to gain His pleasure. He does not occupy himself with other than Allah (*masiwa*) and does not seek any other than Allah[380].

Bayazid Bistami would take every opportunity to state that the path to Allah was long, bumpy, and filled with ups and downs and that it was not easy to reach Him. Those who believed that they had reached Him were only at the beginning. About himself he would say: "Even after leaving behind many endless stations, I still saw that I was only at the beginning and not yet reached reality"[381].

His love of Allah (*Muhabbatullah*)

Bayazid Bistami had delved into the ocean of divine love and was a great Lover of Allah. One time Yahya ibn Muadh wrote him a letter which said:

"There is a man here who drank a cup from the ocean of *muhabbatullah* and was never again thirsty".

Bayazid replied:

377. In the chapter Al'i Imran, Allah Most High states that the state of *dhikr* in which the believers remember Allah whilst standing, sitting and lying down, that is in every state, is the desired thing.
378. Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* II, 187.
379. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 170; Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 73.
380. Qushayri, *ibid,* p. 481.
381. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 193.

"I am amazed at the weakness of your state. There is a man here who, even though he has swallowed all of the oceans of the universe, he still cries out: "O water, is there any more?"[382]

There are some who are able to quench their thirst on the path of *marifatul-lah* with one glass of water. Then there are some who drink oceans of water and are yet thirsty. This state presents the true spiritual state of the servant.

❁

One day Bayazid Bistami said:

"Everyone flees from being taken to account while I wish that Allah, Most High, takes me to account". He was asked why and he replied:

"It may be that while Almighty Allah is taking me to account He will address me saying: "O my servant" and I will reply: "*Labbayk*, (here I am at your service) o my Lord". For Him to address me as 'O My servant" is more pleasing to me than the world and everything in it. Then He can do with me as He wishes"[383].

❁

Bayazid Bistami would describe the state of those who love Allah as follows:

"Almighty Allah has certain special servants who if He were to deprive them only a little of witnessing His Beauty in Paradise, they would implore him to save them from this deprivation just as those in Hell beg to be saved from punishment"[384].

❁

He once made the following supplication to Almighty Allah:

"O Allah! I am not surprised by my love for You for I am a lowly servant. But rather I am amazed by Your love for me as Your servant. This is because You are a Supreme Lord and yet You still love a lowly person like me"[385]. `

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382. Qushayri, *ibid* p. 179, 491; Imam Sharani, *at-Tabakatu al Qubra,* I, 65.
383. Ibn Mulaqqin, *Tabakatu al Awliya,* Cairo 1415, p. 399-400; Hani al Hadaiq, p. 320.
384. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* X, 34; Qushayri, *ibid,* p. 499.
385. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya,* X, 34.

Bayazid Bistami expressed his love and awe of Allah as follows:

"I have a habit that I have continued now for thirty years: whenever I wish to remember Allah I wash my mouth and my tongue well in order to honour my *dhikr* of Him"[386].

The following event indicates the value and virtue in the sight of Allah of the reverence shown for *dhikrullah*.

One time the great saint Ibrahim ibn Adham washed the soiled and foul-smelling mouth of a drunkard. When he was asked why he did this he said:

"It would have been great disrespect to leave the tongue and the mouth which were created to remember the Name of Allah, in a soiled state..."

When the drunk sobered up he was told:

"The ascetic from Khorasan, Ibrahim ibn Adham, washed your mouth..." Extremely embarrassed, the drunkard's heart was suddenly revived and he said:

"In that case I have repented..."

Later in his dream Ibrahim ibn Adham was addressed by Allah as follows:

"You cleaned his mouth for Me. Now I have cleansed his heart for you..."

Ten things

Bayazid Bistami once said:

The following ten things are the duty of every believer:

1) Performing the obligatory acts and striving to do the supererogatory.

2) Fleeing from the forbidden and the doubtful.

3) Being humble for the sake of Allah.

4) To help one's fellow believers and not to be a burden on them. Rather one should lighten their load.

386. Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, X, 35.

5) To behave with uprightness towards everyone, good or bad and to give counsel (To display the beautiful character of Islam).

6) To seek forgiveness from Allah for oneself and for the entire community of Muhammad

7) To seek Allah's pleasure in every matter (To pray to Allah that He reconcile our intentions and our deeds with His own pleasure).

8) To abandon anger, arrogance and overstepping one's limits.

9) To leave argumentation and crudeness and become a kind and refined believer.

10) To advise oneself 'Be prepared for death'.

The following ten things are like a fortress to protect the believer:

1) To protect one's eyes (On the Day of Judgement, every good that the eye observed and every evil that it observed will be put forth plainly. Almighty Allah says:

'...when they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin will testify against them concerning what they did' (Fussilat, 41:20).

2) To habituate one's tongue to remembrance of Allah.

3) To take one's *nafs* to account (To abide by the instruction "Take yourself to account before you are taken to account" and to measure one's every act against the standard of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

4) To act with knowledge, to do what one does knowingly and to receive one's share of *marifatullah.*

5) To preserve one's *adab* (Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi once said: "My reason asked my heart: "What is faith?" and my heart whispered into the ear of my reason, saying: "Faith is pure *adab*".

6) To distance the body from unnecessary worldly affairs.

7) To retreat from time to time and ponder on and delve into the Divine splendour and manifestations of His power.

8) To engage in the struggle against the *nafs*.

9) To increase one's worship and striving in the way of Allah.

10) To follow at all times and in all places the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah...[387]

His Death

Bayazid Bistami (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the year 234 after the hijrah, which corresponds to the year 848 AD. At his last breath he was in a state of remembrance of Allah just as he was during his entire life.

He then said:

"O my Lord! I made *dhikr* of You in a state of heedlessness and now my life is leaving me. My worship and my obedience were also in a state of weakness and heedlessness. I do not know when I will reach the state of '*hudur*'[388]"

He then passed away in a state of *dhikr* and *hudur*[389].

He has a simple and modest tomb in the town of Bistam in Iran and other *makams* in various places.

Some of his words of wisdom

• The Sufi is the one who holds the Holy Qur'an in his right hand and the Sunnah in his left; one of his eyes is turned towards Paradise, the other towards Hell; he enters the state of ihram by wrapping the world around his lower body and the hereafter around the top part and from between them he cries out: "*Labbayk Allahumma labbayk*/ Here I am at Your service o Allah. I have submitted myself to Your command and I am ready" and runs to his Lord"[390].

387. Sahlaghi, ibid, p. 133-134.
388. ***Hudur***: This is a spiritually wakeful state in which one is aware of oneself being in the presence of Allah, when the heart is completely aware and conscious of being together with Allah. The aim of *dhikr* is to arrive at this state. That is, the expression '*hudur*' does not mean 'comfort or ease' but is rather the state of being with Allah by attaining the reality of *dhikr*.
389. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 208; Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 183.
390. Sahlaghi, *ibid*, 124; Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 71.

• One time when he was asked: "What is the path to Allah like? How do I reach it?"

Bayazid Bistami replied: "You can reach it only when you annihilate your ego"[391].

• "The people nearest to Allah are those who tolerate the pain brought on by others, who fulfil their needs with compassion and who are the best in character"[392].

• "La ilaha illallah" is the key to Paradise. However it is a fact that a key with no teeth will not open the door. The teeth of this key are then:

1) A tongue that has been cleansed of lying, accusations, gossip and vain words.

2) A heart that has been purified of deceit and wiles and the dismalness of sins.

3) A stomach that has been cleansed of forbidden and doubtful things.

4) Righteous deeds that have been freed of the desires of the *nafs* (such as pride, conceit and ostentation) and innovations (*bid'a*)[393].

• "Much *dhikr* is *dhikr* that is not great in number but that which is done in wariness of heedlessness and in a state of being present"[394].

• "Love the Friends of Allah, make your love for them obvious, and make yourself beloved to them so that they will love you. Allah, Most High, looks at the heart of His *awliya* seventy times every day and night. It might be that He sees your name in the heart of His *wali* and He then loves you and forgives you your sin"[395].

• "Tasawwuf is to cleanse oneself of one's carnal desires, to submit one's heart to Almighty Allah, to adorn oneself with beautiful character, and to always be in the direction of earning Allah's pleasure"[396].

391. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 199.
392. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 199.
393. Hani al Hadaiq, p. 320.
394. Attar, *Tadhkira,* p. 198.
395. Abbas, *Abu Yazid,* p. 70; Sahlaghi, *ibid*, p. 99, 115.
396. Sahlaghi, ibid. p. 138.

• "They took my heart to the heavens where it travelled around the entire realm. I asked my heart: "What did you bring back from there?" It replied: "Love and contentment for it was there that I observed that these were in demand"[397].

397. Attar, *Tadhkira*, *p*. 202.

7. Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani

(May Allah have mercy on him) [963 - 1033]

Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in approximately the year 352 after the hijrah (963AD) in the village of Kharaqan to the north of Bustam. He was the son of a farming couple. He was also himself later occupied with farming.

Due to his devotion and his worship, his struggle against his *nafs*, and his constant state of *dhikr* and *muraqaba*, he was called the 'Shaykh al-'Asr', which means 'The Shaykh of this century'. Many people observed many *karamat* and other extraordinary acts by him[398].

All of the true Friends of Allah of that time were in awe of him and praised him much[399].

His life of worship

From a young age Kharaqani was much given to worship.

In addition to the obligatory acts, he would also perform much supererogatory prayers. Sometimes such a state would come over him that he would feel the need to redo his prayers due to anxiety that he had prayed them in heedlessness[400].

398. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* XVII, 421.
399. Hujwiri, p. 377.
400. Attar, *Tadhkira*, p. 637.

One day Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani asked his students:

"What is the most superior and valuable thing?"

They replied:

"O Shaykh, we do not know, give us the answer".

He replied:

"A heart that is filled with remembrance of Allah at every stage of life, at every time and in every place"[401].

He would also say:

"The Friends of Allah are ever in a state of great sorrow. The reason for this is that they are unable to remember Allah in a way that is worthy of His Glory"[402].

In the same way the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) used to pray as follows:

"...O my Lord, I am incapable of praising You as You are worthy of being praised. You are as You have praised Your own Being" (Muslim, Salat, 222).

The reverence and love that Kharaqani felt for Almighty Allah was so great that he would advise others as follows:

"When you say Allah, do not converse with any who say another word"[403].

He was always with Allah

Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani was always in a state of contemplation on the manifestations of Divine Greatness and Power and lived his life in a state of *ihsan* and *muraqaba*. He also advised his students to do the same. The following words of his reflect his *maiyyah* that is his consciousness of being with Allah:

"Generally people pray as follows: "O Allah, help us in three places: when we are dying, when we are in the grave and on the Day of Judgement".

401. Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 444.
402. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 248.
403. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 444.

However I say: “My Lord help me always and everywhere”[404].

“Seal your tongue so that it does not speak of that which Allah is not pleased with”.

“Put such a lock on your mouth so that nothing forbidden may pass through it”.

“And place a seal upon all of your other limbs so that they cannot perform any deed with insincerity”[405].

“My Lord! When I offend the people they immediately change their path as soon as they see me (However You my Lord, how merciful are you that) despite our offending You so much, You are still with us”[406].

“Allah, Most High, addresses his servants with the following four things: Their body, their tongue, their heart and their wealth. It is not enough to give one’s body to serving and one’s tongue to *dhikr*. As long as one does not give one’s everything to Allah and generously spend one’s wealth in the way of Allah, one cannot progress in this path of union”[407].

Reaching perfection by purifying the nafs

On the matter of the purification and education of the *nafs* Kharaqani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah brought you to this world pure so do not enter His presence spoiled”[408].

The Holy Qur’an states:

“Those who keep from disobedience to their Lord in reverence for Him and piety will be led to Paradise in companies. Until, when they arrive there, its doors will be opened (as sheer grace from God), and its keepers will welcome them saying: “Peace be upon you! Well you have faired and are purified, so enter it (Paradise) to abide forever!’ (Zumar, 39:73).

404. Attar, p. 638.
405. Attar, p. 627.
406. Attar, p. 616.
407. Attar, p. 631.
408. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 258.

"The true Friends of Allah who have reached elevated stations are also raised because they have purified their *nafs* as well as carried out their deeds with sincerity"[409].

"Just as *salat* and *sawm* are obligatory and necessary, so too is removal of conceit, envy and greed from the hearts"[410].

The greatest sign of the acceptance of our worship is that our character is elevated.

"If a flame from the oven happens to catch on to your dress you immediately try to put it out. So how can you allow such evil traits as conceit, envy and ostentation to remain in your heart when they are like fire that will burn your religion"[411].

"Weep much, laugh little; be silent much, speak little; give out much, eat little; keep your head away from the pillow (do not become a slave to sleep and allow your inner world to become cumbersome)"[412].

Kharaqani preferred the state of sorrow and did not approve of the *sama* and *raks*[413]. He did not give any importance to outer forms such as special robes or prayer mats.

His sensitivity towards lawful (halal) food

Kharaqani had a favoured student who was more superior in his eyes than all his other students. One day he said to his shaykh:

"Master, we have some brothers who own sheep and whose property is therefore lawful. For a long time now they have wished to donate some of their sheep to the tekke"

The shaykh replied:

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409. Attar, p. 622.
410. Attar, sp. 629.
411. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 239.
412. Attar, p. 630.
413. The *sama* is the ceremony performed by the Mawlawi darwishes, and *raks* means a spiritual dance (Translator's note).

"I am in such a state of reliance upon and submission to Allah that Allah, Most High, said to me: "I will meet all your needs". If you promise not to insist again, I will accept these on this one occasion, on the condition that they are lawful..."

They gathered the sheep together and brought them to the shaykh. The shaykh left the tekke and when he moved his arm some of the sheep entered the tekke whilst others fled and escaped to the other side so that no one could make them go in When they investigated they found out that these sheep were not in fact lawfully fed[414].

One night the shaykh's servant made some pickles. He then placed some herbs that the shaykh had planted with his own hands. It was not in the habit of Kharaqani to eat if he had not prayed the '*isha* prayer. He would say:

"O Allah, I will not feed my body until I have completed my worship of You in reverence".

After the '*isha* prayer, the food was brought and he said:

"There is the scent of doubt coming from this food".

The next day they went to the garden and saw that some people had allowed some water to flow into their canals in order to water their wheat. Since the canal that led to the shaykh's garden had been left open some of this water flowed there and his vegetables had been watered with some of this water[415].

There is a hadith which states:

"Beware of the firasah (discernment) of the believer for when he looks he looks with the light of Allah" (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 15/3127).

Sensitivity in one's discernment, insight and *taqwa* is the art of the heart that is close to Allah.

Eating and speaking little

Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani (may Allah have mercy on him) once said:

414. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 315.
415. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 315-316.

"It has been forty years that we did not cook or do anything other than to prepare for guests. From the food that we cooked for our guests we benefitted only as much as to suffice us"[416].

Kharaqani would relate the following story:

One day Luqman Hakim said to his son:

"My dear son, fast today and take note of everything that you say. After you have presented to me everything that you said at night and taken it to account, you may break your fast".

When the night fell, his son began to account for everything that he said. It had gotten quite late and he was very hungry. Luqman Hakim told him the same thing the next day and his son was again late in breaking his fast. When on the third day the same thing happened again, his son abandoned unnecessary talk on the fourth day. When his father asked him to account for his words he said:

"I did not speak much for fear of having to account for what I said".

Luqman Hakim said to him:

"Go then and break your fast".

After relating this story Kharaqani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"On the Day of Judgement the state of those who abandoned unnecessary talk will be peaceful like that of the son of Luqman Hakim"[417].

His mercy, compassion and serving of others

Abu al Hasan al Kharaqani once said:

"When the scholar wakes in the morning he wishes to increase his knowledge and when the ascetic wakes he wishes to increase his asceticism. Whilst Abu Hasan is only concerned with bringing joy and happiness to the heart of his brother"[418].

416. Attar, p. 637.
417. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 265.
418. Attar, p. 611.

"A believer who reaches the evening without offending his brother in religion is as if he spent the entire day with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). If he offends a believer, Allah, Most High, does not accept his worship that day"[419].

"O Allah! If there is a person more compassionate than me towards Your creation then I will be embarrassed of myself"[420].

"From Turkestan to Damascus, whoever's finger has been pricked, it is as if my finger has been pricked and whoever has struck their foot against a rock, I have felt the pain. In whosever heart there is sorrow, that heart is my heart"[421].

"O my Lord! I am Your and Your Messenger's slave in all circumstances and I am the servant of the believers"[422].

"The greatest *karamah* is to serve the creatures of Allah without feeling fatigue or weariness"[423].

His advice to Mahmud of Ghazni

When the great Sultan and conqueror of India, Mahmud of Ghazni arrived at the surrounds of the village of Kharaqan, he wished to visit Abu al-Hasan of whom he had heard much praise. He first called one of his men and sent him to Abu al-Hasan with the following command:

"The Sultan of Ghazni wishes to visit you, so come out to greet him with students". If he hesitates remind him of the verse: '**Obey Allah and His Messenger, and those who have authority amongst you**..." (Nisa, 4:59). His aim was to test Abu al-Hasan's spiritual perfection, by seeing how he would respond to his instructions.

When the messenger had carried out his duty, Kharaqani said to him:

"Say to Mahmud: "Abu al-Hasan is so occupied with the command to 'Obey Allah' that he does not have time to concern himself with you".

419. Attar, p. 628.
420. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 247.
421. Attar, p. 604.
422. Attar, p. 616.
423. *Name-I Danishwaran-I Nasiri,* I, 297.

These words deeply affected Sultan Mahmud and he said to those with him:

“Rise and let us go to the Shaykh. This man is different he is not like those we know”.

When they arrived in his presence Sultan Mahmud said to him:

“Give me some advice”.

Kharaqani responded:

“O Mahmud be careful about four things: *taqwa*, prayer performed in congregation, generosity and compassion towards the people”.

Sultan Mahmud made a request:

“Pray for me”

Kharaqani replied:

“In my five daily prayers I pray as follows: “O Allah, forgive the believing men and the believing women”. You are included amongst those”.

Sultan Mahmud said:

“I want a special prayer”.

Kharaqani responded:

“O Mahmud, may your end affair be *mahmud* (that is good and beautiful)”. He then stood to take his leave. Sultan Mahmud asked:

“When I first arrived you showed me no favour, now you stand on your feet. What was that state before and now what is this?”

He replied:

“When you first came you came with the pride of a sultan and to test me, but now you leave with a broken heart and with the state of a dervish. The sun of being a Dervish has begun to shine over you”. Before I did not rise for you because you were a sultan but I stand for you now because you are a dervish”.

Many other great men came to visit Abu al-Hasan Kharaqani and many of them became his followers. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) also visited him and was greatly influenced by him[424].

Another of his disciples was Abdullah al-Ansari al-Harawi, the author of *Manazil as-Sa'irin*, in which he describes the spiritual states and ranks and which has an important place in the history of tasawwuf.

He says:

"I have studied with many teachers in the sciences of hadith, fiqh and other Islamic sciences. My teacher in tasawwuf is however Abu al Hasan al Kharaqani. I would not have reached the truth if I had never met him"[425].

Some of his Karamat

When he was a child, his mother and father would give him his bag of provisions and send him to the pastures to graze the animals. Without telling them he would fast and give out his provisions to the poor people around him. He would come home in the evening and break his fast but nobody would know of it.

When he was a little older they gave him the task of ploughing and planting the seeds. One day he had planted the seeds and was ploughing the land. At that point the *adhan* was called. He immediately left his plough and stood to pray. When he had finished he saw the cows continuing to plow on their own. He immediately bowed his head in prostration and prayed as follows:

" O Allah, I have heard that You hide from the people those whom You befriend (Hide me from the people)"[426].

For twelve years Abu al-Hasan would perform the night prayer in congregation and then go to visit the tomb of Bayazid Bistami, the sultan of gnostics, with great respect and manners. He would then be ready at his own tekke for the dawn prayer. In this way he walked three leagues. One day he heard a voice from the tomb of Bayazid saying:

424. Attar, p. 597.
425. Jami, *Nafahat,* 482.
426. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 280; Attar, p. 593.

"It is time to guide others". In great humility he said:

"O Shaykh help me in my task for I am an illiterate man and do not know the shariah properly. I have not learned the Qur'an with its true meaning".

The voice from the tomb replied:

"O Abu al-Hasan recite: "I seek refuge in Allah..." and the voice began to teach him to read.

By the time Kharaqani reached his lodge, he had recited the entire Qur'an[427]. His knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah increased even more after that day.

One time one of his students asked for permission from Abu al-Hasan to see the 'the Spiritual Pole of the world' and then set out to do so. After much effort he saw that Abu al-Hasan fit that category; that he was in fact, the Pole of the world, which made him extremely embarrassed and apologetic. Abu al-Hasan approached his student in great humility and compassion and cautioned him as follows:

"You must hide what you have seen. I pray to Allah to conceal me from the people in both this world and the next"[428].

His Death

When his death was approaching, Kharaqani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Dig my grave thirty yards deep because this earth is higher than that of Bistami's. It is not acceptable that the place where I am to lie be higher than the honourable grave of Bayazid Bistami, neither is it conformable with decorum. He passed away a little while later[429].

The date of his death was the year 425 after the hijra on the Day of Ashura (11th December, 1033).

427. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 307.
428. Attar, p. 595.
429. Attar, p. 639.

It is said that his blessed tomb is in the town of Kharaqan, 12km from the town of Bustam in Iran. According to some narrations Abu al-Hasan Kharaqani set out with the Islamic army for jihad and was martyred near Kars and was buried there. There is a tomb in Kars which is attributed to him.

Some of his wise words

• "(At least one of) the limbs of the believer should be constantly occupied with Allah, Most High. A believer should either remember Allah, Most High, with their heart, or with their tongue, or he should see those manifestations of divine greatness that the Almighty wants him to see, or be generous with his hands (with mercy overflowing from his heart), or visit people with his feet, or serve the believers with his entire being, or strive to reach a state of *marifah* with his mind through contemplation, or do his deeds with sincerity, or fear the terror of the Day of Judgement and warn others about the matter.

I can guarantee that such a person will go to Paradise with complete ease as soon as he raises his head from the grave!"[430]

• "The dissension that the following two people can create in the religion cannot be achieved even by Satan himself:

1) A scholar greedy for the world,

2) A raw Sufi deprived of knowledge[431].

• "I do not say that 'You do not need to perform deeds. However are you the one who is in reality performing the deed that you consider yours or are you being made to do it, this is what you need to be aware of. In fact, the servant carries out his trade with the capital which belongs to Allah (because the One who created everything out of nothing and who is the absolute Doer is Almighty Allah. When you give up your capital to Allah then its beginning is His, its end is His and its middle is His. Your trade profits because of Him not because of You.) There is no path there for the one who sees his share in the market"[432].

430. Haraqani, *Nuru al Ulum,* p. 240.
431. Attar, p. 624.
432. Attar, p. 625.

7. Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani (May Allah have mercy on him) [963 - 1033]

• "After faith, Allah, Most High, has not given His servant anything greater than a pure heart and a truthful tongue"[433].

433. Attar, p. 628.

8. Abu Ali Farmadi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1010 - 1084]

Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the village of Farmad near the town of Tus in Khorasan in the year 401 after the hijrah. After completing his elementary education he entered the madrasah of the famous Sufi Abdulkarim Qushayri in Nishabur.

In a very short time he became one of his most select students. After learning the outer sciences he then took permission from his master to leave the madrasah in order to settle in a Sufi lodge and progress in the inner sciences of the heart. For a time he occupied himself with struggle and abstinence.

He benefitted from many scholars and guides. Eventually he connected himself to Abu al-Hasan Kharaqani and reached great ranks with him. Soon after, he was given the duty of guiding others. He strived greatly in this struggle. His speech was beautiful, clear, eloquent and effective. He would adorn his talks with many similitudes, which spiritually adorned the hearts. His assemblies of guidance were likened to a garden filled with colourful, fragrant and rare flowers and fruit trees[434].

He taught many great scholars and gnostics such as Imam Ghazzali and Yusuf Hamdani.

Imam Ghazzali meticulously continued his practice of supererogatory worship, *dhikr* and *awrad* that Farmadi inspired in him based on the essence

434. Sem'ani, *Ansab,* X, 125; Abdulghafir, *Tarihu Naysabur,* p. 628.

of tasawwuf and need for eternal salvation. He also abided by the principles of the struggle against the *nafs* that his teacher applied[435] .

Imam Ghazzali says:

"Abu Ali Farmadi taught me that it was essential that a murid treat his shaykh with complete and beautiful manners (*adab*)…"[436]

Abu Ali Farmadi was known by the titles *Ruqnu al-Islam* (a great and strong personality of Islam), *Qutbu Zaman* (the Pole of his time), and *Shaykh al-Mashayukh* (the shaykh of the shaykhs). He was the teacher of the shaykhs from Khorasan, the unmatched murshid of the century and one of the greatest guides of the *ahl al sunnah wa'l jamah*.

Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him) placed great importance on both the outer and inner principles of the religion. He would also tolerate the 'people of love' who would experience divine ecstasy from time to time and he would treat them with respect.

He possessed deep contemplation and wisdom. Despite his serious and dignified stance, his beauty overcame his majesty and he was extremely compassionate and kind.

He served others with discernment and *adab*

Abu Ali placed much importance on service in the path of Allah. When he served others he did so with great adab and discernment and was very careful about what and when he did something, and where and how.

One time his master entered the hamam of the lodge. Farmadi immediately went to the well and drew up a few bucketful of water and filled the water tank. His master was very pleased with this act and this sensitivity. When he came out of the hamam he asked who brought the water. Abu Ali did not say anything. When his master asked a few times he was obliged to tell him that he had brought the water. His master gave him the good news that he would be given great blessings and spiritual ranks on account of his service to others[437].

435. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* XIX, 323-324; Subki, *Tabakat*, VI, 209.
436. Ghazzali, *Ihya*, IV, 178.
437. Jami, *Nafahat,* s. 514; Ahmad Hilmi, *Hadiqatu al Awliya,* p. 13.

Service of others with good manners is at the top of the list of beautiful traits that are a means for one's spiritual advance.

His modesty and nothingness

Almighty Allah manifests His mercy in his slave who walks the earth in humility[438]. They live in awareness of their humility and sense of nothingness compared to Allah.

One time Abu Ali Farmadi was giving a sermon in a gathering in Nishabur. The great scholar Imam al-Haramayn Juwayni was also present. Juwayni asked Abu Ali Farmadi the following:

"Which group of people is indicated in the hadith "The scholars are the heirs of the prophets".

In great humility Farmadi replied:

"The members of that group are neither like those who ask nor those who are asked about this. The heirs of the prophets are like those righteous individuals who are sleeping at the door of that masjid". He then pointed to the tomb of Muhammad ibn Aslam.[439]

It must have been due to the influence of these words that Imam al-Haramayn leaned towards tasawwuf in his later years and occupied himself with spiritual discipline (*riyadah*)[440].

His guidance of Nizam al-Mulk

Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him) would spread the truth in a very sweet and pleasant manner. In particular, he would delicately correct the errors of the rulers and guide them towards the truth. One of those rulers who was blessed with receiving his guidance was the vizier of the Seljuqs, Nizam al-Mulk, who had established the Nizamiyyah madrasah.

438. See Furqan, 63.
439. Attar, p. 276.
440. *DIA*, "Juwayni" mad.

Nizam al-Mulk was a scholar of virtuous character. He would adorn his assemblies with scholars and *faqihs* and spent most of his time with them. Those around him would criticise him saying:

"These men are preventing you from much of your business". He would respond:

"These men are the embellishment and beauty of this world and the hereafter; were I to carry them on my head I would not be considered to be doing too much".

Whenever the scholars and the gnostics entered his presence he would immediately stand up and greet them and seat them next to him. Whenever Abu Ali Farmadi entered he would immediately stand and sit him in his own seat and kneel down before him in all courtesy. One day when someone criticised him about this he explained:

"When the other scholars approach me they exalt me and praise me more than I deserve, saying: "You are like this and you are like that"... In this way they inflate my ego and make me tend towards pride. However Abu Ali Farmadi reminds me of my faults and the injustices that I have committed and warns me for the sake of Allah. My *nafs* is thus shattered and I turn back from many errors I have made".

It must have been through the blessings of the warnings and guidance he received from Abu Ali Farmadi that Nizam al-Mulk placed much importance on performing salat on time. When the *adhan* was called none of his affairs could prevent him from performing the prayer. He would continue to fast on Mondays and Thursdays. He established many endowments (*awqaf*) and gave out much in charity.

Nizam al-Mulk showed a great deal of respect towards the masters of tasawwuf. One time when he was censured for this, he narrated the following event:

"I used to serve one of the kings. One day a blessed man came to me and said:

"For how long will you serve one who will end up as food for dogs tomorrow? You should serve those who guide you. Do not serve those who will become fodder for dogs".

I did not understand the implications and veiled message in these words. That night, the Amir whom I was in service of became drunk and went out in that state. There were dogs in that Amir's garden and they would savagely attack any strangers who came by night. That night they did not recognise him and ripped into him. In the morning we saw that that ruler had been eaten by the dogs. Now I am in search of people like that shaykh who advised me in all sincerity, I am in pursuit of them"[441].

At every opportunity, Nizam al-Mulk would attend the talks of Farmadi. One time he became very touched by his words and his tears wet his robe. Farmadi said to him:

"Do not weep to wet your clothes". Then he continued:

"If the entire world were to be the property of one person and he gave out from this property for the goodness of man he would still not reach Allah with this act" (It is only through Allah's mercy that he can do so).

After a period of silence he then said:

"The ruler will be taken to the place of judgement from his throne".

He then warned Nizam al-Mulk of the following:

"Never forget! It is from your state throne that they will take you to the place where you will be taken to account"[442].

❁

Abu Ali Farmadi (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in Tus in the year 1084.

One of his wise sayings

In an exposition of the following verse:

'(My Messenger) Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you for your wrong actions. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.

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441. Ibn Kathir, *al Bidaya,* XII, 173.
442. Ukayli, *Bughyat al Talib fiy Tarihi Haleb,* Daru al Fikr, V, 2488-2489.

"On the Night of the Ascension the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) saw a group from the angels. They were constantly occupied with saying; "Muhammad, Muhammad, Muhammad..." There was no group of angels more virtuous than this group in all of the seven heavens. The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked angel Gabriel:

"Who are these?" Gabriel replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! Just as your *ahl al bayt* are the most honourable and respected of humans on earth, these angels are the most honourable and sacred of the heavens".

"O Gabriel how is it that they have come to have such great honour?"

Gabriel replied:

"The *wird* of these angels is your honourable name of Messenger of Allah. It is because of this that they have been made superior to all other angels".

And so the seven heavens are kept raised by love for Him and respect in following him"[443]

443. Muhammad Parsa, *Fasl al-Hitab,* p. 600.

9. Yusuf Hamdani

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1049 - 1140]

Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the village of Hamdan in the *hijri* year 441. He went to Baghdad, the centre of the caliphate, when he was eighteen years old to study. He learned various Islamic sciences such as *fiqh*, *hadith*, *tafsir* and *kalam* from the great scholars. He surpassed his peers with his intelligence and abilities and became a favourite with his teachers.

He had memorised an endless numbers of books about the Islamic sciences. He met with many of the *shuyukh* of his time and attended their talks[444].

He is mentioned in *Rashahat* as follows:

"He specialised in the field of hadith and in the matter of *sanad* (chain of narrators) in particular. On the one hand he was occupied with studying and on the other he was preaching to and advising the Muslims, thus carrying out his duty of guiding others. The people would find contentment in his beautiful advice"[445].

Many scholars from Baghdad, Isfahan and Samarkand studied in his hadith classes[446].

A short time later he became tired of the arguments that arose from fiqh and kalam and he turned towards tasawwuf. He attached himself to Abu Ali

444. Ghujduwani, *Makamat,* p. 40.
445. *Rashahat*, p. 40.
446. Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 521.

Farmadi. In addition, he had in his possession the staff and turban of Salman Farisi[447].

His practice of guiding others

After completing his studies in tasawwuf Yusuf Hamdani established a Sufi lodge in Merv in order to guide the people. This lodge performed a great service and in addition to Sufis, other masters of knowledge also attended. However Hamdani did not reside here all the time and travelled to many cities in order to guide others. When he was 65 years old he returned to Baghdad, having attained a reputation for being a great preacher and Sufi. He established an assembly of preaching at the Madrasah of Nizamiyyah where he once studied himself and was greatly respected by the people[448].

He bore great resemblance in terms of disposition to his colleague there, Imam Ghazzali. However, where Imam Ghazzali placed great importance on writing books, Hamdani was more occupied with worship and guiding people. Thus, he did not spend much time writing.

Yusuf Hamdani taught many great gnostics such as Ahmad Yesevi and Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani.

Abdul Qadir Jilani also attended the assembly of Yusuf Hamdani and benefitted from him[449]. It is recorded that it was Yusuf Hamdani who encouraged Jilani to preach and guide others[450].

Hamdani directed his students to the two basic elements of the Khwajagan, which is serving others and *suhbah*. He would travel frequently and teach Islam to the people. He was the means for many people receiving guidance.

One time the great zahid Abu al-Hussain Maqdisi was asked:

"Have you ever seen any of the Friends of Allah?" He responded:

447. Ghujduwani, *Makamat,* p. 41-42.
448. See Safadi, *al Wafi, bil Wafayat,* XXIX, 47-48; Dhahabi, *Tarihu al Islam,* XI, 643.
449. Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 510-511.
450. Dhahabi, *Siyer*, XX, 446-447.

"During my travels I saw a man in Merv preaching to the people and inviting them to believe in Allah. They called him Yusuf and he was one of the true Friends of Allah"[451].

One time Hamdani was asked:

"What should we do for our salvation if the period passes and the true Sufi Masters travel on to the hereafter?"

Hamdani replied:

"Read 16 pages from the works of the friends of Allah every day". Taking inspiration from these words Fariduddin Attar penned his work *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*[452].

His good character

Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him) was a compassionate man with a smiling face and a soft manner. He was always humble and generous towards the poor, the lonely and the abandoned. Even though he was very kind and friendly to everyone, he was also stately and dignified towards very worldly and arrogant people[453].

Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani describes the beautiful character of his guide Yusuf Hamdani as follows**:**

"This reverend Shaykh has not deviated from the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in the slightest. He has lived his life in the footsteps of the Companions (*Sahaba*), the Followers (*Tabi'een*), the generation after the *Tabi'een* (*Tabi al-Tabi'een*) and Pious Predecessors (*Salaf-i Saliheen*). He would always recite the following blessed words:

"The true Way is the way of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He said: "*O Abu Hurairah! Teach the people my way (my Sunnah) and you too act by it so that you can attain to a light that will illuminate you on the Day of Judgement*".

451. Dhahabi, *Siyer,* XX, 68.
452. Hamadani, *What is life?* (trans. Necdet Tosun), s. 14, 91.
453. See Husain Wassaf, *Safinayi Awliya,* c. II, s. 6.

Since this was the indication of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), this great Shaykh, whose path was pure, would invite his friends and those who followed him to live according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He would warn the people of following the desires of their *nafs*, of innovation (*bid'a*), of opposing the shariah, of the way of falsehood and of people of dissension (*fitnah*) and of copying the imitators. One time he said:

"O Abdul Khaliq! Know that the journey (*suluq*) towards Allah consists of two parts:

The first is the apparent journey (*suluq'i zahir*) which is to always comply with the divine commands and prohibitions, preserve the standards of one's religion and flee from the desires of the *nafs*.

The other is the inner journey (*suluq'i batin*) which is the struggle to cleanse the heart and eliminate the traits of the *nafs*. This is what they call inner (*batin*) cleansing. An eternal struggle and determination for the *dhikr* of the heart is required so that the heart can come to a state in which it always remembers Allah.

He then gave the following advice:

"Make sure that you are on the path of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and do not deviate from the limits of the shariah in the slightest. When you see someone doing something in opposition to the religion then prevent him".

On the 11th day of the month of Ramadan in the year 504, the king of the Seljuq state, Sultan Sanjar sent a letter to the students of Hamdani.

In that letter he made the following request:

"As I have learned from the elders of Samarkand the honoured shaykh Yusuf Hamdani has reached an old age. Unfortunately we have no opportunity to enter in the presence of that honourable man. 50,000 dinar, meticulously earned through lawful means, has been sent to cover the expenses of the dervishes. You recite a Fatiha for our affairs too. Our sole desire is for you to write about the character and state of the great shaykh and send it to us. For we have heard that the way and attitude of the Shaykh is exactly like the way of the Sahaba. Please give this matter great importance and honour the one who prays for you with this".

Hamdani recited the Fatiha for the solving of his difficulty and then in great humility he said:

"O dervishes. What I have to say other than my own faults that I can write and send to Sanjar?" Some of his leading students said:

"Master! It is your dervishes' request that you allow us to write about your character and state".

Hamdani then said:

"In that case write whatever you have seen that is in accordance with the shariah of the Messenger of Allah".

Some of the beautiful states observed in the life of Shaykh Yusuf Hamdani are as follows:

The Shaykh travelled to Hajj many times on foot. On most days he would be fasting. He would fast the last ten days of the month of *Jumada al-akhir* and in the month of Rajab and would never abandon these acts. He would ask Allah for success in his worship and obedience.

He frequently sent invocations upon the prophet (*salawat*) and sought forgiveness from Allah (*istighfar*) and he would pray the *witr*, *tahajjud* and *tasbih* prayers close to one another. He would continue to regularly pray the morning, *ishraq*, *awwabin*, *tahajjud* and *istikhara* prayers. He would supplicate often and advise his students to do the same.

When performing acts of worship such as giving charity and zakat, he would feel an indescribable feeling of peace. He would enter into *itiqaf* (solitary retreat), he would slaughter the sacrificial animals, and he loved to free slaves.

The signs of *dhikr* that he made with his heart would become apparent in his limbs. In addition to the *awrad* that he continuously recited he would recite the chapter Yasin and read a 30th of the Qur'an after every obligatory prayer. He would sometimes recite one 30th in two rakats of prayer. However he would not lengthen the prayer he led in congregation. Whilst walking and at every opportunity he would recite from the Qur'an.

He went out for many expeditions for the sake of Allah. He would go to the houses of the unbelievers, the Christians, fire-worshippers and Zoroastri-

ans and talk to them about the virtues of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), proclaim to them the divine reward and punishment of the hereafter and was the means for many of them being guided.

He would also warn the sinners and keep away from them unless they reformed themselves. The number of people he made repent and come back to the straight path is unknown.

He would frequent the masjids, the *sahra*, the neighbourhoods, villages and mountains and teach the rulings of Islam to whoever resided there, the Turks, the Tajiks, Arabs, masters, slaves, dervishes, merchants, leaders, shepherds, those who he knew and those he did not know. He would stay there and teach them the essentials of the Islamic commandments to the best of his ability.

His spiritual talks were very prosperous and beneficial. He would often relate the virtues of the four caliphs and narrate anecdotes from them. He had a religious school in which he taught.

Every month he would call the leading men of Samarkand and he would converse with them about the matters of tasawwuf. The great men of Samarkand would also attend.

On Thursday and Friday nights and on the *eid* nights, he would visit great men. He would ask his visitors about the city they had come from, who the dervishes were and the names of the great Sufis who were buried there.

He was often teary-eyed. Due to his extreme reverence and awe of Allah, never once did he extend his legs out. He would weep out of fear of Allah. He would fear the divine warnings found in the Qur'anic verses and be filled with hope in the face of the verses that mention the divine good news and promises. His heart was always in a state of '*bayn al khawf wa raja'*', that is, it was in a balance of fearing the wrath of Allah and hoping to meet with His mercy.

He would carry on his person a copy of the Qur'an, a prayer mat, a comb, the *siwak* stick and a towel. He would always be in a state of ablution and would never abandon praying in congregation without a valid excuse. He would treat with extra kindness and goodness those who hurt and pained him the most.

In the Holy Qur'an it is said:

And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.' (Fussilat, 41:34).

He would hide his *karamat* and his state of being a *wali* of Allah. He would accept the invitation of the believers, without distinguishing between them, be they wealthy or poor, strong or weak. He would never belittle anything or anyone, nor take them lightly. He would never boast to anyone. He would not prefer the wealthy over the poor on account of their wealth. He would always talk about the poor and wealthy states of the Sahaba and command his students to follow them.

He would visit the graves often, and greet the people of the graves with the greeting of peace. He would read prayers from the Qur'an and from the hadith. In particular he would visit the grave of Qusam ibn Abbas very often. He would make much remembrance of death and weep about the Day of Judgement, or about giving up one's life, about the questioning to be done in the grave, about being resurrected, about having one's book of deeds read out, about the Balance (*Mizan*) and about the Bridge (*Sirat*).

He would always be prepared for death and lived his life in the awareness that the hereafter was the real life.

His livelihood came from making boots and farming. He would befriend those who ate from lawful provision and who worked in lawful trades. He would warn those who were lazy and tried to live off of the back of others and tell them that to work and earn one's livelihood was a divine command. He would encourage the people to eat and dress from lawful earnings and to work in a halal manner. He would never prevent what was due to another.

He would give out whatever Allah gave him, to the poor, the orphans, the lonely and abandoned and the needy. He would look out for them. He never once asked anybody for anything, thus remaining independent and he advised his students to do the same.

He was in a constant state of reliance upon Allah and submission to Him. He never condescended to worldly benefit, and advised those who inclined towards the world. He would not take his ablution from silver or golden uten-

sils. There was nothing in his room apart from a straw mat, a felt cloak, an urn, two pillows and a pot.

He would not frequent the markets and bazaars and he would not eat from the food that was cooked there. He would eat his food without any fat. He would mostly eat dry bread with vinegar. His back was bent over from hunger and abstention. He was always in a constant struggle against his *nafs*.

He would eat from the same plate as the believers and would wash his hands before and after eating. He would say 'Bismillah' before eating and 'Alhamdulillah' after finishing. He would begin and end his meal with a pinch of salt.

He would never eat without remembering Allah and he would say:

"Eating food is like planting a seed. The seed must be planted with a beneficial awareness and perception so that the food can turn into an act of obedience".

He would expound on those words that took a person to disbelief and pray as follows: "O Allah. I seek refuge in You from associating any partners with You. I ask you to forgive me for those deeds that I am not aware of. You are undoubtedly the knower of all that is hidden".

He would not speak before his own shaykh out of courtesy towards him. When speaking he would never say 'I'. If he had to, he would use words of humility instead. He never spoke a hurtful word to anyone. His words were sweet and soft. He would never curse nor condemn anybody. He would prevent his students from eating human flesh (backbiting) and from speaking too much. He himself would speak little and concisely. He would greet every believer he came across and would stand out of courtesy to whosoever entered his presence. He would address whoever he saw as '*khawaja* (master).

He was in a constant state of contemplation and was often sorrowful. When he laughed he did not do so loudly, but would smile instead. He preferred solitude and retreat.

In his assemblies he would address everybody generally. He would enter the mosque and Sufi lodge with his right foot and exit with his left. He would eat his food with his right hand. He would not perform the prayer nor eat with his head uncovered.

He would not recite the Qu'ran with a loud voice. Even if he broke his ablution many times during the day, he would renew it and would never be without ablution even for an instant. He would seek refuge with Allah from all dangers and threats, both physical and spiritual. He would warn his students about enemies from the jinn, human beings and Satan as follows:

"These enemies can be defeated by always being in a state of ablution and constant remembrance of Allah with the heart".

If somebody did a small act of kindness towards him, he doubled it in return.

He would look in front of him when he walked. He would not walk through the field of another. He would remove anything harmful from the path. He would see to his own chores and would go to the mill himself.

He greatly desired to meet his Lord as a martyr. Whenever he heard that one of his friends had been martyred whilst on *jihad*, he would perform the funeral prayer over him in his absence.

He was a true friend of Allah, who loved from the heart and who was loved from the heart. He was a man of sincerity, piety, truthfulness and ease.

He would be ever grateful to Allah and never complain about changing conditions. He lived his life in a state of contentment. He showed complete satisfaction and submission to the decree of Allah. Even though he suffered from a constant headache he never complained about his state. One day he said:

"It has been 43 years since this condition has been given to me". Then he continued:

"There were Companions who had constant problems but they hid their state from the people".

He never envied anyone. He never complained about the cold nor the heat. He was content with all of creation. He considered plants precious and would never pass wind nor spit where they were.

He would never argue with the Muslims. He would have a good opinion about everyone and would pray behind them. He never slandered the people of the *qibla* by accusing them of being unbelievers. He would lead the funeral

prayer of everyone, be they old or young. He would treat even his enemies well.

He was selfless towards his fellow brothers from his *suhbah* and would prefer them over himself. He would visit the sick, help those in need, give loans and not ask for the money back.

He would never rush his chores, and was patient in the face of tribulation. He did not disclose his secrets to those who were incapable of helping him.

He would be saddened and seek forgiveness if he was unable to perform a righteous deed or perform some service. Every night he would take account of his day. He would meticulously protect his clothes from filth. He was a man of his word.

If he happened to smell a nice scent he would invoke blessings upon the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and read the following prayer:

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

"There is no god but Allah, the True Possessor, the Real, The Clear and Apparent and the One who declares the truth to his servants.

I absolve Allah the Possessor of Greatness, from all faults and I praise Him. I seek forgiveness from Allah for all sins and I turn back to Him"[454].

His devotion to the rulings of the Shari'a

Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him) was extremely dedicated to the outer and inner commands and prohibitions of Islam. In great wakefulness of the heart, his understanding of tasawwuf was such that he was in meticulous control of all of his states and behaviours and he advanced forward in the direction shown by the Qur'an and the Sunnah in a very cautious and careful manner.

454. See Ghujduwani, *Makamat,* p. 38-47.

For this reason he did not vie for wonder working nor display them and he did not approve of expressions and behaviour that came about as a result of a state of spiritual drunkenness or the effects from a state of ecstasy.

About the famous Sufi Hallaj Mansur, he said:

"If Hussain ibn Mansur knew the truth of *marifah*, instead of saying "*Ana al-haqq*" ("I am the Truth, the Real"), he would have said: "*Ana al-turab*" (I am dust)"[455].

Another time he said:

"A person who does not follow in the footsteps of the religion and of the shariah, has followed Satan, even if he displays thousands of miracles in one day. A person who believes in something that is in opposition to the Sunnah, is like a bandit even if he has memorised all of the sciences of the world"[456].

His Death

Yusuf Hamdani (may Allah have mercy on him) spent the last years of his life in the two great centres of Khorasan, Merv and Harat. He passed away while he was returning to Merv from Harat, on his last journey to the town of Bamain on the 22nd day of the month of Rabi' al Awwal in the year 535 (4th November, 1140). They first buried his body there, but a short time after, one of his students by the name of Ibn an-Najjar transferred his grave to Merv. Today his tomb can be found in a place called Bayram Ali near Merv, on the border of Turkmenistan, and is called 'Khwaja Yusuf'.

Some of his wise words:

• "Close the door to your ego and open the door to service of others and *suhbah*"[457].

• "Take every breath in a state of awareness and perception (*hos dar dam*), look at the tips of your feet while you are walking, (*Nazar bar qadam*), turn towards your inner journey which will take you from human attributes

455. Hamadani, *What is life?* p. 16.
456. Hamadani, *What is life?* p. 92.
457. Ahmed Qasani, *Adabu al Saliqin,* Istanbul University Library, FY, pub. 649, issue. 57b, 62a.

to the Divine attributes (*Safar dar watan*) and be with Allah while you are amongst the people (*Khalwat dar anjuman*)"[458].

• "While you are in the presence of the Sufi masters, sit with manners, respect and awe, both inward and outward"[459].

458. Ghujduwani, *Makamat,* p. 45.
459. Ghujdawani, *Makamat,* p. 45.

10. Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d.1179-1220]

Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the town of Ghujduwan, approximately 40 km away from Bukhara. His father was Abdul Jamil Efendi, a great scholar of the inner and outer sciences from Malatya and from the lineage of Imam Malik.

According to narrations, Abdul Jamil Efendi helped the Sultan of Malatya to return to his throne after being removed from power by the enemy. He was rewarded for this act by being offered the Sultan's daughter in marriage.

Khidr gave good news to Abdul Jamil Efendi that he would have a son through this marriage and he told him to name him Abdul Khaliq[460]. A short time later Abdul Jamil Efendi gathered together his family and migrated to the town of Ghujduwan in Bukhara. Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani was born here[461].

Abdul Khaliq went to Bukhara at a young age to study and whilst he was reading a commentary with the great scholar of the town, Imam Sadraddin, he came across the verse:

'Call on your Lord humbly and secretly. He does not love those who overstep the limits' (A'raf, 7:55).

He asked his teacher what was meant by 'secretly. When making *dhikr* openly other people knew, and when done in secret, Satan was aware of this.

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460. Ghujduwani, *Makamat,* s. 47-48; Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 17a-17b; Molla Abdulhakim, *Kandiyya*, Tahran 1955, p. 13-14; Nasiruddin Bukhari, *Tuhfatu al Zairin,* p. 41.
461. *Rashahat*, p. 59; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, vr. 74b-75a; Muinaddin Naqshibandi, *Kanzu Saada*, p. 687; Lahuri, *Hazinatu al Asfiya,* I, 532; Haririzade, *Tibyan*, I, 378a.

It is known from the hadith that Satan passes through man like blood flows in the veins[462]. In that case how was one to perform *dhikr* in secret?

His teacher, Sadraddin Efendi gave the following reply:

“My son, this is a matter of *ledunn* knowledge. If Allah so wills He will send you a man from His friends who will teach you this matter”[463].

Guidance from Khidr

According to narrations, one day while Ghujdawani was sitting in the garden, Khidr came and told him to dive into the pool and whilst under the water to make the following *dhikr*:

“لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ”[464] (La ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah).

In this way Khidr taught him the method of performing *khafi dhikr* (hidden remembrance of Allah). He also taught him to observe the number, thereby teaching him the principle of *wuquf adadi* (Awareness of Numbers)[465].

Another day Khidr came to Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani who brought two loaves of barley bread from his home. Khidr did not eat and Ghujdawani said:

“Eat, the food is lawful”. Khidr then said:

“Yes it is lawful however the one who kneaded the dough did so without having ablution. It is not suitable for us to eat from this”[466].

In this way Ghujdawani was spiritually trained by Khidr and later devoted himself to Yusuf Hamdani, again under the instruction of Khidr[467]. He said about this matter:

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462. Bukhari, Ahkam, 21.
463. Abu al Qasim, *al Risaletu al Bahaiyya*, issue. 53b-54a; *Rashahat*, p. 59-60; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazaratul al Quds,* I, 75a; Hani al Hadaiq, p. 353.
464. Muhammad Bukhari, *Maslaqu al Arifin,* Istanbul University Library, FY, nr. 185, vr. 32a; Jami, *Nafahat,* p. 523; Fazlullah ibn Ruzbihan, *Sharh Wasayayi Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani*, Suleymaniye Libary, Yahya Tevfik, nr. 190, vr. 85b-86a.
465. Abu Qasim, *al Risaletu Bahaiyya*, vr. 68a-68b; *Rashahat*, s. 60; Muinaddin Naqshibandi, *Kanzu as Saade*, p. 685.
466. *Rashahat,* p. 92-93.
467. See Anonym. *Makamat-i Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani and Arif Riwgari*, p. 2; Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 17b; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, vr. 76b.

"I was 22 years old. Khidr, the teacher of hearts that are awake and alive, charged me to the great master, Yusuf Hamdani and told him to train me. Whenever Yusuf Hamdani came to Maveraunnehir, I would rush to his service, trying to benefit from him and being revived by his prosperity"[468].

His Virtues

His countenance was ever smiling as Ghujdawani was a true friend of Allah, with his majesty, discernment and foresight. He dispensed prosperity and spirituality wherever he went.

While he was in Bukhara he continued to attend the talks of Hamdani. When he left, he returned to his home town of Ghujduwan and began to lead a solitary life of abstention and struggle. However he continued to carefully hide his great spiritual state.

Abdurrahman Jami (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"The style of Ghujdawani was a model that all of the Sufi orders respected. He continued in his devotion to trustworthiness, spiritual purity, and the Qur'an and the Sunnah; he fled from innovation (*bid'a*) and struggled to act against his own desires and whims and always kept secret from others the state and rank that he reached"[469].

Just as Ghujdawani was extremely humble himself, so too did he sternly caution his own spiritual children from pride, arrogance and conceit.

One day one of his visitors said:

"Master, pray for us so that we can preserve our faith. In this way, Allah willing we can save our lives from the traps of Satan and find salvation".

Ghujdawani gave the following reply:

"The solution to that is as follows: If a person complies with the obligatory acts, his prayers will be answered and accepted. First perform righteous deeds and then mention us in your prayers, after your obligatory acts. We too

468. *Rashahat,* p. 61.
469. Jami, *Nafahatu al Uns,* p. 523.

will mention you in our prayers. We then hope that Almighty Allah will accept our prayers”[470].

Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani, who is also known by the title, ‘The head of the chain of Kwaja, is considered to be the saint who established the tariqah of the Khwajagan and who set forth the principles of the Naqshi tariq, the foremost of which is *khafi dhikr* (*dhikr* done in secret).

Naqshibandiyya, which was known by the titles of ‘Bistamiyya’ or ‘Tayfurriyya’, in reference to Bayazid al-Bistami, up until that time, was then known by the name ‘Tariq al-Khwajagan’, from the time of Ghujdawani until Muhammad Bahauddin”[471].

The leading scholars and rulers of Bukhara became his students.

His manners as a servant

One of the dervishes once came to Ghujdawani and said:

“If Allah Most High were to leave me free to choose between Heaven and Hell, I would choose hell, because for my entire life I resisted the desires of my *nafs*. So if I prefer Heaven, then this will be a desire of my *nafs*...”

Ghujdawani responded to this dervish, who spoke from on high about Paradise without even being sure of whether he would be offered it:

“What does the servant have to do with personal choice? We go wherever and, we will be wherever, Almighty Allah wills. This is resisting the *nafs* and serving Allah, that is, this is submission to Allah and living in contentment with His acts; it is not as you say”.

This time the dervish asked:

“Can Satan harm those who are on the path of the Sufis?”

Ghujdawani replied:

“Yes, when a traveller, who has not yet reached the last phase of annihilating one’s *nafs*, gets angry, Satan can plague him. The one who has annihi-

470. Jami, *ibid,* p. 525.
471. See Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 80.

lated his *nafs* will not get angry. In place of anger, there is in him '*ghayrah'*, that is a sensitivity towards the commands of Allah. Satan flees the place where there is '*ghayrah'*...[472].

In the Holy Qur'an it says:

"Satan said: He said, 'My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on the earth seem good to them and I will mislead them all, every one of them, except Your slaves among them who are sincere' (Hijr, 15:39-40)

Thus, only the righteous believers, who Allah has preserved in their sincerity, can be saved from the evil of Satan. One must constantly seek refuge with Him in all sincerity in order to attain this state.

The importance of *suhbah*

One time one of the students of Ghujdawani remained absent from his talks for a period of time. Every night in his dream this disciple saw a group of people come to him and say:

"You have reached perfection let us take you to Paradise".

They then mounted him on a camel and took him to a beautiful place filled with decorative thrones, precious furniture, delicious food and running water. When it was morning he would find himself in his bed once more.

One day Ghujdawani realised, with the light of discernment, that state of this student and he asked him about his dreams. When the follower told him what happened, Ghujdawani advised him as follows:

"If you go there again repeat three times: "لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ" ('There is no power nor strength but from Allah', then open your eyes".

That night in his dream the student followed the advice of his master. When he opened his eyes, he found himself amongst the bones of dead animals and realised that this was a satanic dream. He never again missed a *suhbah* of his teacher[473].

472. Jami, *ibid,* s. 524; Parsa, *Faslu al Hitab,* p. 599; Hani, *al Hadaiq*, p. 575.
473. *Makamati Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani and Arif Riwgari*, p. 14-15; Badraddin Sirhind, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, vr. 83b-84b.

Sacred words (*Kalimat-i Qudsiyya*)

The eight principles put forth by Ghujdawani are considered to be the fundamental rules of the *sayr i suluq* of the Naqshiband order. These rules, which have been termed the ‘Sacred Words’, are as follows:

1- ***Hosh dar dam* (Awareness while breathing)**: With every breath one should be in a state of *dhikr* and spiritually, awake and wary of heedlessness.

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“This path has been established upon the breath. This is why one must protect their breath while inhaling and exhaling. In fact, one should even protect the period between two breaths”[474].

2- ***Nazar bar qadam*** (Watching one’s step): When walking, one should look at the tips of one’s feet in order to avoid seeing anything that will lead to heedlessness. What veils the heart the most are those unnecessary and negative images that are reflected on to it by the eyes.

In addition, looking at one’s feet whilst walking protects the eyes from looking at the forbidden and has the virtues of good manners, modesty, humility and devotion to the Sunnah.

3- ***Safar dar watan*** (Journeying in one’s homeland): To move towards The Real with every step and move away from carnal desires. It is to start the inner journey of developing one’s spirituality, which will allow one to reach its peak.

In its outer form it is to travel to visit a Perfected Guide and to enter under his training.

4- ***Khalwat dar anjuman*** (Solitude in a crowd): Outwardly, it is to be with the people while inwardly one’s heart is with Allah.

King Hussain once asked Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him):

“What is *khalwat dar anjuman*?”

Naqshiband replied:

474. Hani, *Hadaiq,* p. 360.

"This is to be outwardly familiar with the people while inwardly one is constantly pre-occupied with Allah; familiarity with the people is possible for those who do not neglect their *dhikr* and contemplation of Allah".

The King asked again:

"Is such a thing possible?"

Naqshiband recited the following verse in reply:

"...there are men who proclaim His glory morning and evening, not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah and the establishment of salat and the payment of zakat…' (Nur, 24:37)475.

5- ***Yad kard*** (Remembrance): With the *dhikr* of the tongue the heart is also brought to a state of remembrance by doing '*nafy u dhikr*'. This is the struggle and effort to delve into the reality of the *kalima i tawheed*. By saying 'La ilaha' it is to banish from the heart all desires and whims that leave the servant heedless of his Lord and to remove and erase all aims other than Allah from the heart. Then it is to establish the reality of 'Illallah' in this cleansed heart, and struggle to turn the heart to Allah only.

6- ***Baz gasht*** (Restraint): After *dhikr* of 'La Ilaha Illallah' it is to say the following sentence:

اِلٰهِى أَنْتَ مَقْصُودِى وَرِضَاكَ مَطْلُوبِى:

"O Allah! You are my aim and my purpose is to gain Your pleasure".

7- ***Nigah dasht*** (Watchfulness): To protect the heart from unnecessary thoughts and to preserve the meaning of *nafy u isbat*[476] in the heart.

8- ***Yad dasht*** (Recollection): To continue the spiritual wakefulness established by *dhikr* and to constantly be aware of being in the presence of Allah.

In addition to these eight rules, there are three more principles that have been known from old:

475. Salahaddin bin Mubaraq al Bukhari, *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 67.
476. *nafy u isbat* is the practice of negating and affirming by repeating the *dhikr* of 'La ilaha illaAllah'.

1- ***Wuquf zamani*** (awareness of time): To be in control of one's time, to use it well and to struggle to spend each moment in a state of spiritual awareness by frequently taking account of one's nafs.

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"*Wuquf zamani* is when the traveller is always in control of his state. If his deeds necessitate that he be grateful, then he is grateful, if he needs to repent, then he repents. That is, he should be grateful for the times of ease and expansion (*bast*), and be repenting and seeking forgiveness for the times of constriction (*kabd*)"[477].

2- ***Wuquf adadi*** (Awareness of numbers): This is to observe number when performing *dhikr*. In *khafi dhikr*, the counting of the number of *nafy u isbat*, it is important to ensure that the number is an odd number. This meticulousness protects the heart from disarray. There are many more mysteries and instances of wisdom in abiding by the number declared in *dhikr,* however, only those who have been given wisdom can perceive these via their heart. The number in *dhikr* is like the teeth on a key. Just as if the number of teeth is either too great or too little, the key will not open the lock, so too if one does not observe one's number whilst performing *dhikr*, then the effect will be lessened.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself advised us to count out *dhikr*.

3- ***Wuquf qalbi*** (Controlling one's heart): This is to turn to the heart or for the heart to turn to Allah whilst performing *dhikr*. This is an indication that the feeling of *ihsan* has come to a constant state of consciousness. The traveller must be in control of his heart at every opportunity and look at what state it is in since the true aim in *dhikr* is that the heart knows what it is making *dhikr* of. *Dhikr* is not merely words uttered by the mouth that do not impact on the heart. This is why during *dhikr* one should concentrate all of one's attention on what is being remembered. The Holy Qur'an states:

'Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely' (Muzzammil, 73:8)[478].

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477. Salahaddin bin Mubaraq al Bukhari, *ibid, a.g.e,* s. 95.
478. *Rashahat*, p. 62-77; Nizamaddin Hamush, *Risala*, Sulaymaniya Library, Ashir Efendi, nr. 443, vr. 153b-154a; Tajaddin ibn Zakariyya, *Risala fiy Tariq as Sadetin Naqshibandiyya*,

His death

For most of his life, Abdul Khaliq (may Allah have mercy on him) lived in the town of Ghujduwan and it was there that he passed away. Various dates have been put forth for his death, ranging from 1179 to 1220.

His successor, Arif Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) narrates:

"I was once witness to an event in which my master Ghujdawani said in the last part of his life:

"O my friends! Work hard. Embrace this path. May Allah not leave you deprived upon this path.

One hour later we heard a voice from the unseen:

'O self at rest and at peace,

return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased!

Enter among My slaves!

Enter My Garden' (Fajr, 89:27-30)

Then our master gave up his spirit. Even when we were preparing for his funeral prayer, his lips were still moving saying: "Allah, Allah". Everyone was in a state of shock. We kept asking each other: "What is the wisdom in this?"[479].

A hadith of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) states:

"*However you lived that is how you will die and however you die, that is how you will be raised up again*" (Munawi, Fayz al-Qadir, V, 663).

Whilst still alive, Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) warned his students about making a tomb over his grave. This is why for a long time, there was no tomb over his grave[480]. Today his tomb is a simple and modest structure, made up of a rectangular piece of marble.

Sulaymaniya Library, Rashid Efendi, nr. 474, vr. 51a-52b; Hani, *Hadaiq*, p. 355-369.

479. Khwaja Muhammad Arif ar Riwgari, *Arifname* (Translated from Persian into Uzbek by Sadriddin Selim Bukhari and Israil Subhani), Tashkent 1994, p. 15-16.

480. *Makamat Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani and Arif Riwgari*, p. 18; Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid* I, vr. 91b.

His wise words

• One time Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani replied to a question about *khushu* (reverence) in prayer as follows:

"A person who performs their *salat* (perfectly) is enveloped in such awe and reverence that if someone casts an arrow at him he will not say anything"[481].

• "It is necessary to abide by the religious commands and prohibitions always, placing one's feet on the prayer mat of the sharia and *istiqama*, to act with *taqwa* and by the Sunnah, and to flee from *ruhsah* (using one's licence) and innovations. One should take the prophet's words as one's guide, and learn his hadith and the words of the Companions"[482].

The *ruhsah* that is indicated here are not the sharia rulings that Allah has placed in order to make things easy for His servants, such as wiping over the boots (*mash*), or shortening the prayer whilst travelling. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Just as Allah, Most High, is not pleased when people do those things that He has forbidden, so too He is pleased when His servants use the licence that He has given" (Ahmad, II, 108).

Some examples of the unwanted *ruhsah* that are indicated here are becoming overwhelmed with lawful pleasures, to go to extremes in laughing and comedy, to slip into heedlessness and for one's stomach to be always full[483].

• "Flee from keeping company with heedless people as you would flee from a lion".

• "Know that the beginning of the path is *tawbah*. The meaning of *tawbah* is to shun all words and acts that are displeasing to Allah"[484].

481. *Makamat Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani and Arif Riwgari*,ps. 9; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, vr. 81b-82a.
482. Parsa, *Qudsiyya*, p. 8-9; Muhammad Qadi, *Silsilat al Arifin*, vr. 44a-b.
483. Kurdi, *Tanwiru al Qulub,* p. 562.
484. *Az Guftar-i Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani*, Tashkent Sharkiyat Institute Library, nr. 1494, vr. 125b-137a. This work was shortened and translated into Uzbek Turkish by Mahmud Hasanov: *Khwaja Jehan Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani,* Tashkent 1994, p. 26-34.

• "One of the most necessary acts of courtesy on this path is to be in a constant state of ablution. Another one is to perform two rakats of *shukur-i wudu* (ablution of gratefulness) provided it is not a time of *karahah*"[485].

His last testament to his students

1- My dear child! I advise you this, that you take *taqwa* as your mark. Hold on tightly to your acts of worship and your other duties. Watch over your states. Always be in a state of fear of making a mistake.

2- Carry out your responsibilities towards the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) by obeying the rulings of Allah. Abide by the rights of your mother and father and your teacher so that Allah, Most High, can protect you.

3- Never abandon your recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Bring order to your inner and outer in accordance with the Qur'an. Recite the Qur'an with contemplation and take your lesson from it, with teary eyes, either in secret or in the open. Measure your every state against the Qur'an and make it accordingly.

4- Never remain distant from study. Learn the sciences of fiqh and hadith. Stay away from ignorant Sufis who are thieves on the path of religion and who waylay the paths of the Muslims.

5- Tightly embrace the Sunnah of the prophet and take the way of the imam's of the righteous predecessors.

6- Do not keep company with worldly youth, the people of innovation or arrogant wealthy men! They will steal your religion from you.

7- Be content with two loaves of bread from the world and eat from what is lawful, for this is the key to all good. Stay away from the forbidden otherwise you will find yourself distant from Allah.

8- Flee those people who follow their carnal desires, and keep company with the poor and needy. Protect yourself from the deceiving embellishments of the world, so that the fire will not burn you. Carry your own load.

485. Mahmud Hasanov, *Khwaja Jehan Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani*

9- Eat and dress from what is lawful so that you can taste the pleasure of your worship.

10- Always fear the wrath of Allah and never forget that you will be made to stand in the place of judgement.

11- Worship often day and night and never abandon the congregational prayer. However do not be the *imam* or *mueddhin* if there is a possibility of you becoming proud or conceited.

12- Do not appear in the courts unless it is absolutely necessary. Do not keep company with arrogant sultans. Do not leave the advice of the friends of Allah.

13- Intensely flee from fame. Let not your religiousness be the talk on every one's lips.

14- Try to please the friends of Allah, taking great care in this matter.

15- Do not become proud if someone praises you, nor saddened if someone criticises you. Let the people's praise and criticism be equal in your sight. (Take great care in ensuring that Allah is pleased with you). Always treat people with good character

16- Be courteous and well-mannered. Have mercy on all people, be they young or old. Do not laugh too much; for too much laughter is from heedlessness and it will deaden the heart.

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12).

17- Do not consider yourself immune from the punishment of Allah but never lose hope of His mercy. Live in a state of balance between fear and hope as this is the sign of the perfect believers.

18- My dear child! A master is like a father to his disciple. In fact, he is even more merciful to him than his father. This is because he brings him to a station of closeness to Allah. The warnings and rebukes of your master are due to his compassion for you.

19- Be in a constant struggle against your *nafs*. Live your every moment with a fear of the hereafter and remember death often.

20- Remove love of leadership from your heart. It is not correct to call someone who is infatuated with leadership a master of tasawwuf.

21- Fast much, for fasting protects a person.

22- Do not allow your heart to become enchanted with love for this world, and always vie for the hereafter. Be religious and loyal. Be a *faqih*, a scholar, a person of *taqwa* and persistence.

23- Serve the friends of Allah in the way of Allah, with your property, your body and your life. Submit to them and follow their advice. If you do not submit and do not take their advice you will not benefit from them.

24- Never ask for anything from people and be a person of *tawakkul*. Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an:

"...Whoever puts his trust in Allah – He will be enough for him' (Talaq, 65:3)

Know that provision has already been accounted for. Give out from what Allah has given you.

25- Stay away from miserliness and envy, for tomorrow the misers and the enviers will be thrown into the fire.

26- Trust in the promise of Allah! Do not expect anything from mere mortals. Speak the truth and do not fear! Be with Allah always. Do not speak more than necessary with the people, thereby wasting your life, otherwise you will be kept distant from Allah.

27- Always be careful with the breath you take, know its value and control your tongue. Do not promise things that you cannot do and always advise the people.

28- Reduce the amount that you eat and drink. Sleep little and speak little. Do not eat before you are hungry and do not speak unless you need to. If you sleep a little at night before waking, your (night) prayer will be more ordered and you will be able to pray for longer.

29- It is more fitting for you to busy yourself with prayer and fasting in order to control your nafs and keep your heart alive.

30- Let your heart always be filled with sorrow, your eyes teary, your deeds sincere, your prayer be struggle, and your clothing modest. Let your friends be *dervishes*, your house a masjid, your property Islamic law, your adornment abstention and your friend Allah Almighty.

31- Do not befriend a person in whom you do not see the five following virtues:

a) They prefer the hereafter over this world.

b) They see their actions better than knowledge and their knowledge better than delving into the world.

c) They know that modesty and humility are more precious than being complimented and esteemed.

d) They are people of discernment and foresight; they are determined to perform righteous deeds, both in secret and in the open.

e) They prepare themselves for death.

32- My son! Do not let the world and its adornments deceive you. Be ready day and night to migrate from this world to the hereafter. Let your heart be with Allah always. Let your heart be broken from fear of Allah. Live in this world as if you were a guest and leave it in the same way.

33- My son! Just as I act by the legacy bestowed upon me by my shaykh (may Allah sanctify his precious spirit), you too keep these words of mine in your mind and apply them. If you do so, this world and the hereafter will be your protector, Allah willing[486].

486. See Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani, *Wasaya*, Bayazit State Library, Waliyuddin Efendi, nr. 3229, vr. 10b-16a; Isfahani, *Sharh-i Wasaya,* vr. 103a; *Rashahat,* s. 61-62; Hani, *al Hadaiq,* p. 354-355.

11. Muhammad Arif Riwgari

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1237]

Muhammad Arif Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the village of Rigor approximately 7km from Ghujduwan in the north of Bukhara. He entered into the service of Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) at a young age. He gave great importance to worship and serving others. He would force himself to remain awake. Seeing this exceptional resolution and effort Khidr prayed that he become a gnostic. By the blessings of this prayer he did in fact become a great gnostic[487].

In his first talk Ghujdawani gave Khwaja Arif (may Allah have mercy on them both) the following advice:

"A traveller on the path to The Real should know the value of his time. He should frequently take himself to account and see what state he is in, as time passes him by little by little. If he spends a moment with his heart in a state of wakefulness and in peace, then he should know that this is a state that requires gratitude and he should give thanks to Allah.

However, if, your moment was passed in heedlessness then you should immediately make amends and seek Allah's forgiveness"[488].

After the death of Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him), Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) started on his own path of guidance and

487. *Makamat-i Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani and Arif Riwgari*, p. 4-5.
488. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* III, 233.

continued for many years. He showed great care in continuing in the same direction as his master.

Towards the last days of his life and because the times required it, he began to teach vocal *dhikr*, (*dhikr jahri*) and he allowed it. In this way, the people who had become very distant from *dhikr* began to hear it and vie for it.

Riwgari was known for his knowledge (*'ilm*), wisdom (*'irfan*), asceticism (*zuhd*), God-consciousness (*taqwa*), abstinence (*riyadat*), his worship (*'ibada*) and his complete devotion to the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

It was due to his particular care in following the Sunnah that he was raised to such a high rank.

Arif Riwgari, who knew the Sunnah of the prophet very well, and who struggled to teach it and live by it, generally began his talks with the following words:

"May Almighty Allah honour us with the joy of following the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad, the best and most virtuous of all of mankind, and the master of this world and the hereafter. Allah loves that He is obeyed and followed. The tiniest atom's weight of following him is better than all of the pleasures of this world and more superior than the bounties of the hereafter. True virtue is to follow his elevated Sunnah"[489].

Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) was well-mannered towards everyone and he would take great care not to hurt another's feelings. He gave great importance to purification of the *nafs* and cleansing of the heart and would intensely shun all forbidden things. In fact, he would even abandon most of the lawful things from fear that he might do something forbidden. He would spend his nights in worship and his days in teaching his students.

As a result of his teaching and guidance of others, Riwgari was the means for many people to be guided and for many others to be raised to the status of a *wali*.

He passed away in Riwgar, in the hijri year 634 (1237). His blessed tomb is there.

489. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* III, 233.

He was between fear and hope

Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) narrates: “Shaqiq al-Balkhi had a very righteous and pious daughter by the name of Amina. One day she said to her father:

“Dear father. Do not call me by the name ‘Amina’. A person who is truly ‘*amin*’ is the one who is saved from the wrath of Allah. But I do not feel safe. On the contrary, I feel surrounded by four kinds of danger:

The first one is death, which every soul shall taste.

The second is the fear of sin. Allah Most High says: “...**Then every soul will be repaid in full what it has earned (while in the world)’** (Baqara, 2:281).

The third is the enemy. Almighty Allah says: “...**And do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytan. He truly is an outright enemy to you’** (Baqara, 2:168).

The fourth is the fear of not knowing what my end-affair will be. I try as much as I can to perform good deeds but I do not know how my life will end or what my end affair will be. Dear father, you too do not even know what your hereafter and end affair will be”.

After saying these words, Amina passed away”[490].

His words of wisdom

• “The beginning, joy, and key to the Sufi path are to seek refuge in Allah in repentance and reverence. *Tawbah* is the most important *wird* of the believer”[491].

• “Serve everyone with your life and your property and do not give orders to anyone”[492].

• “Abandoning the world, that is the carnal desires, means that the heart is always with Allah. This matter is an indication that you have reached a high rank”[493].

490. Arif Riwgari, *Arifname*, p. 13.
491. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p. 5.
492. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p. 4.
493. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 3.

• "If a person wishes to be happy let him raise himself to the ranks of the angels. That is, let him not incline towards the desires of his *nafs* but rather make his *nafs* obey him. In this way, his inner world will be cleansed, and he will be in a constant state of remembrance of Allah, and he will struggle with all his might to be the true servant that he promised to be. Let him not make any other than Allah beloved to him and not be hopeful of any other than Allah. Let him be ever in the service of the righteous and good men. Let him be careful about his time, which is like a sharp sword; let him not pass any moment in heedlessness or in vain. Let him invoke the Name of Allah always and let his heart be the place where the beautiful attributes of Allah are reflected"[494].

• "The first condition in obtaining knowledge of Allah is to eliminate the desires of the *nafs*, to stay away from disliked and doubtful things and nourish oneself from the permissible"[495].

• "The fruit of *marifatullah* is to turn to Allah with one's entire being"[496].

• "The gnostic is the one who, in every breath bestowed upon him by Allah, he gives his heart to Him entirely. This state continues until his last breath. At the same time, this state of his is hidden from the people"[497].

• "One of the keys of faith is to occupy oneself with pondering on and contemplating the works of Allah. If you wish to see Allah, then witness His work (with the eye of wisdom and taking one's lesson)"[498].

• "Sometimes silence is more effective than speech"[499].

• "Be a person of pure, upright and sound faith! A heart that is afflicted with heedlessness and ugliness will contaminate all other limbs and the body. Is it not so that Allah either accepts or rejects us into His presence because of our heart?"[500]

494. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 3.
495. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 7.
496. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 9.
497. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 8-9.
498. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 9.
499. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 8.
500. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p 4.

• "Consider a bird with a heavy weight upon it; can it ever fly? In the same way if the traveller is very attached to the world he will not be able to open out his wings towards Allah and rise up in the valley of seeking"[501].

501. Arif Riwgari, *ibid*, p. 6.

12. Mahmud Anjir Faghnawi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1286]

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was born three leagues to the north of Bukhara in the village of Anjir Faghna. His father was Yahya Efendi. He is reported to be from the lineage of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)[502].

After staying for a short time in his village he later moved to Wabkent and began to reside there. He earned his livelihood as a builder and entered under the training of Arif Riwgari, thus completing his *sayr-u suluq* and becoming his successor. For years he guided the people in the masjid of Wabkent and trained his students. He had a face which was always smiling and filled with light.

During his last days, Arif Riwgari (may Allah have mercy on him) gave permission for Mahmud Anjir Faghnawi (may Allah have mercy on him) to perform vocal *dhikr*. As a requirement of the times and in accordance with the state of his students, he spent most of his time on this kind of *dhikr*.

Hafizuddin Kabir, one of the leading scholars of Bukhara and the great grandfather of Muhammad Parsa, asked Anjir Faghnawi his intention in performing vocal dhikr.

He replied:

502. Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 19a.

"We perform vocal *dhikr* so that the sleeping can wake up, the heedless can come to themselves and turn towards the path of truth, become upright and follow the shariah and tariqah, so that they can turn to true repentance (tawbah) which is the key to all good and the source of happiness and vie for Allah".

Hafizuddin was very pleased with this reply[503].

It is estimated that Anjir Faghnawi passed away in the hijri year 685 (1286 AD). His tomb is located in the village of Anjirbag, in the suburb of Wabkent in Bukhara. Next to his tomb is a masjid and a well and it is believed that this water has healing properties[504].

503. *Rashahat*, p. 86-87; Badraddin Sirhind, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, 96a-96b; Muinaddin Naqshibandi, *Kanzu al Saada*, p. 694.

504. .Nasiruddin Bukhari, *Tuhfatu al Zairin*, p. 43; Sadriddin Selim, *Bahauddin Naqshiband Yaki Yetti Pir, p*. 9.

13. Ali Ramitani

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1315-1321]

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the town of Ramitan two leagues to the north of Bukhara. He affiliated himself with Mahmud Anjir Faghnawi (may Allah have mercy on him) and completed his Sufi training under him and then became his successor. After guiding the people for a short time in the surrounds of Ramitan, he emigrated to Bavard. He had some students there. After that he went to Khwarezm and settled there[505]. For this reason he is also known as Ali Bavardi.

He is well known amongst the people of tasawwuf by the name of 'Azizan'. According to narrations whenever he would say something that was from his own words he would begin by saying "The Azizan say:" out of humility. This is why he became famous for this title. His face was ever radiant. On the outside he was with the people, but within he was ever with Allah.

When he went to Khwarezm, Ali Ramitani (may Allah have mercy on him) introduced himself as a 'weaver' and was able to obtain a residency permit from the sultan through two of his disciples. Every morning in Khwarezm he would go to the labourers' bazaar and take home one or two workers in whom he saw the potential. He would talk to them about religious and Sufi matters until the afternoon and then give them their wages and let them go.

505. Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 20a.

Once they were in his presence they were unable to leave and they would return again in later days. In this way he gained many disciples in a short period of time.

Some people became apprehensive and informed the sultan saying that his throne was under threat. The sultan then asked Ramitani to leave Khwarezm. However he allowed him to stay when Ramitani showed him his residency permit, and a friendship began between them[506].

He continued to guide the people of Khwarezm and it is reported that he lived until he was 130 years old. It is estimated that he passed away in the hijri year 721 (1321 AD). His tomb is in the town of Kone Urgench, in the province of Tashauz, in the north of Turkmenistan. In addition, there is another site for his tomb in the surroundings of Bukhara.

His work called *Mahbub al-Arifin* is still in existence[507].

His words of wisdom

• "*Worship is made up of ten parts, with nine of them seeking what is lawful. All other worship is this one part"*[508]. The one who does not eat from what is lawful will not find the strength to obey Allah and will always rebel. The one who eats from the lawful cannot disobey Allah..."[509]

• "Where three hearts become one, the believer will have made spiritual progress:

1 – Sura Ya'sin (the heart of the Qur'an),

2 – The sincere heart of the believing servant,

3 – The heart of the night, which is the predawn[510].

• **"Those who serve others, feeling grateful for being able to do so are few. If you are grateful for the opportunity of serving others coming your way and feel obliged towards those you serve, then everyone will be pleased with you and complaints about you will decrease"[511].**

506. *Rashahat*, p. 98-99.
507. Nafisi, *Tarih-i Nazm u Nasr*, I, 220.
508. Daylami, *Musnad al Firdaws,* III, 107/4062.
509. .*Rasail-i Sitta Zaruriya,* Delhi 1308, p. 14.
510. Muhammad Parsa, *The talks of Muhammad Bahauddin,* p. 60.
511. *Rashahat*, p. 90.

• “The condition of love is to act in accordance with what He consents of. The one who claims to love the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) must follow his way”[512].

• “Converse with Allah Most High! If you cannot converse with Him then converse with those who converse with Him”[513]. That is, keep company with the people of *dhikr*, the righteous and the loyal. Benefit from their state and their advice.

• “This world and the hereafter are like twin sisters. It is not possible to marry two sisters at the same time. Love of this world and love of the hereafter cannot exist together. Both the world and the hereafter are created things. In that case, how can love for both the Creator and the creation exist together”[514].

• “In accordance to the ruling of the following verse: “**All good words rise to Him…”** (Fatir, 35:10), in order for the bird of *dhikr* to rise to the elevated realm it needs two wings: one is *huzur* (presence), and the other is *ikhlas* (sincerity)”[515].

• Ali Ramitani (may Allah have mercy on him) was once asked:

“What is faith?” or “What is tasawwuf?”

He replied:

“*Fasl* and *wasl*, that is separation and then union”[516]. That is, to separate the heart from everything other than Allah and then to be together with Allah Most High[517]. In other words, it is to be freed from sin and to reach a state of *taqwa* and advance in it...

• When he was asked: “What is your intention in performing vocal *dhikr*?” Ramitani would reply:

“All of the scholars are in agreement that when a person is on their death bed they should be inculcated with the *kalima-i tawheed* and it is permissible

512. Erzengiî, *Sharh-i Risala-i Azizan*, p. 39.
513. Erzengi, *ibid*, p. 2-3.
514. Erzengi, *ibid*, p. 86.
515. Ali Ramitani, *Mahbubu al Arifin*, (in *Rasail-i Sitta-i Zaruriya*), p. 11-12.
516. Abu al Qasim, *al Risalatu al Bahaiyya*, vr. 49b.
517. Erzengi, *ibid*, p. 146.

for that person to utter the word in a loud voice. According to the dervishes, every breath is our last breath"[518].

• "A good friend is more important than a good job"[519].

• One time in an assembly of Ali Ramitani, one of the scholars praised him by saying:

"You are the essence, we are the mere shell". Ramitani responded:

"The core is under the protection and support of the shell. The shell of a walnut is like the shariah, and the inside is like tariqah. If there were no shell, the walnut would rot and be destroyed. The core is in need of the shell just as the people of tasawwuf are in need of the scholars of the shariah"[520].

• "In the following verse from the Qur'an is an indication and good news: "... **O you who believe. Turn to Allah every one of you, believers, so that hopefully you will have success"** (Nur, 24:31)

It is an indication to repent and there is good news that the repentance will be accepted. If Allah was not to accept the repentance then He would not have commanded it. The fact that He has commanded it is an indication that He will accept it. The only condition is that the person sees their own fault..."[521].

• "We should perform good deeds...however we should not trust in our good deeds and act as if we did not perform them. In this way we can continue in our good deeds by admitting our faults and our weaknesses"[522]. (Just like our prayers, our deeds also require acceptance. This is why the servant should be in a constant state of seeking refuge with Allah).

• "Be very careful about two things: What comes out of your mouth when you speak, and what goes in when you eat"[523].

518. *Rashahat*, p. 90.
519. Erzengi, *ibid* p. 12.
520. Erzengi, *ibid* p. 157, 161, 235.
521. *Rashahat*, p. 92.
522. *Rashahat*, p. 92.
523. *Rashahat*, p. 92.

• "Pray with a sinless tongue so that your prayers can be accepted. That is, be humble in the presence of the Friends of Allah and make a place in their hearts so that they can pray for you[524].

• One day, the following line was read in the presence of Khwaja Azizan (may Allah have mercy on him):

"The lovers have two festivals at the one time". He then said:

"No, they have three festivals". When he was asked about the meaning of this Khwaja Azizan explained:

"This happens when the servant makes mention of Allah, Most High, once and Allah, Most High, makes mention of him twice".

That is, Allah, Most High, first helps that person to make *dhikr* of Him. In this way the servant is given success in *dhikr*. Then Allah honours the servant by accepting his *dhikr*. *Tawfeeq* (success), *dhikr* and acceptance... three festivals in the one breath..."[525].

524. *Rashahat*, p. 94.
525. *Rashahat*, p. 94.

14. Muhammed Baba Samasi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1335]

Muhammed Baba Samasi (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the village of Sammas in the town of Ramitan in Bukhara. He passed his youth in study and under the advice of his father Sayyid Abdullah Efendi, he aligned himself with Mahmud Anjir Faghnawi. Faghnawi then referred him to his successor Ali Ramitani (may Allah have mercy on them)[526].

Samasi went with his teacher to Khwarezm and completed his *sayr-u suluq* there, becoming one of his successors. He then returned to his village of Sammas and began to guide the people there[527]. In stating the first condition of benefitting from his *suhbah* he said:

"The person of modesty, a person of struggle will see every word (from the *subhah*) as applying to him and take a lesson from it"[528].

Muhammad Baba Samasi (may Allah have mercy on him) was a Friend of Allah who had powers in being elsewhere (*gaybet*) and in rapture (*istigrak*). His face was forever filled with light. He had an effective glance, a sharp opinion, and had a great depth of feeling.

While walking with his disciples in Sammas at the time when the birth of Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was near, he passed on by the village of Qasr al Hinduvan and said to those with him:

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526. Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 20b.
527. Lahuri, *Hazinat al Asfiya*, I, 545.
528. Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 186.

"I can smell the name of a brave man coming from this land. Soon this place will come to be known as Qasr-i Arifan"[529].

A short time later, when Baba Samasi again stopped by the Qasr al Hinduvan with his friends he said:

"The scent has become stronger. I have no doubt that that brave young man has come to this world and honoured this land of deprivation".

Three days had not passed when the grandfather of Bahauddin took him to Muhammad Baba Samasi to receive some blessings from his blessed glance. Samasi said to him:

"This is my son. We have accepted him" He then turned to the Sufi's around him and said:

"This brave young man, whose scent we had received for a time, will soon be the *qutb* of this time and a leader of a tariqah"

Having received such an indication, he turned to his successor Sayyid Amir Kulal.

"My son, have compassion on my son, Baha–ud-Din and do not neglect his education and training. If you are lax in this matter I will not forgive you.

Amir Kulal immediately rose and placing his hands on his heart he said with great respect:

"If I am lax in carrying out the will of my teacher, then may I be despicable and base"[530].

When Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was approximately eighteen years old, his grandfather wished for him to marry and he sent him to the village of Sammas to invite Baba Samasi (may Allah have mercy on him) to Qasr al-Arifan. Khaja Bahauddin narrates this event as follows:

529. Qasr al Hinduwan means the palace of the Indians or Guards; while Qasr-i Arifan means the palace of the Arifs (gnostics).
530. Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, *ibid*, p. 38; Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 526; *Rashahat*, p. 102; Muinaddin Naqshiband, *Kanzu as Saada*, p. 698; Majduddin Badahshani, *Jamiu al Salasil*, p. 708.

"When I was about to marry, my grandfather sent me to invite Baba Samasi to my engagement ceremony. His desire was for him to bless our house with his presence. The first *karamah* I witnessed when I was honoured with meeting Samasi was this:

That night a very prosperous state overcame me after listening to the talk he gave. I rose and went to the masjid where I prayed two rakats of prayer and then laid my head down in prostration. I was pleading with Allah in a state of reverence. At that point the following supplication came out of my mouth: "O my Lord! Give me the strength and power to bear the weight of tribulation, to endure troubles and hardship and withstand the suffering that comes from love".

When it was morning I went to serve Khwaja Baba Samasi and he said:

"My son, your prayer should be as follows: "My Lord! Make me this weak servant of Yours successful in matters pleasing to You through Your grace and favour.

"If Allah, Most High, sends a tribulation to one of His servants then, through His grace and mercy, He will bestow upon him the required strength. He will explain to him the wisdom behind it. It is not right for a person to ask for tribulation. One should not err in one's adab and respect".

Later our meal was prepared. After eating they gave me some more bread. I said to myself: "We have eaten here to our fill and soon we will arrive back home, what need is there for this bread?"

We set out and I walked behind them in complete respect. Whenever something contrary appeared to my mind he would say: "My son! We must protect our heart from negative and vain thoughts".

On the journey we stopped over at the house of a person who knew and loved him. The host greeted him smiling and respectfully. When we entered we saw that the host was troubled.

When he asked him:

"Tell me honestly, what is the matter?" The host replied:

"We have some cream but we have no bread to go with it".

Samasi turned to me:

“Bring that bread that they gave you. See how we needed it”.

After witnessing this state my belief in that honourable man increased even more”[531].

A little while after Muhammad Baba Samasi (may Allah have mercy on him) visited Qasr al-Arifan, he passed away. It was approximately the hijri year of 736 (1335AD). His blessed tomb is in the village of Sammas, in Ramitan in the surrounds of Bukhara.

531. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 526-527; Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, *ibid,* p. 36-37.

15. Sayyid Amir Kulal

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1281 - 1370]

Sayyid Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on him) was known as Sayyid because he came from the lineage of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Since Amir earned his livelihood as a potter, he was also known as Kulal. It is estimated that he was born in the year 680[532]. His father was Amir Hamza.

His mother narrates:

"When I was pregnant with Amir I would feel a great pain in my stomach whenever I put something of doubtful origins in my mouth and I was not well until I had brought it up. When this occurred three times I realised that I was pregnant with a blessed child and I took extreme care with what I ate. I waited with great hope for him to come to this world"[533].

Amir Kulal was interested in wrestling when he was young and at a time when he was wrestling in the square in Ramitan, Muhammad Baba Samasi (may Allah have mercy on him) observed him. When asked by his disciples why he was watching a wrestling match, he replied:

"There is a very brave man in this square that many people will be perfected by listening to him speak. I am searching for him".

532. Mawlana Shihabaddin, *Agahi-yi Sayyid Amir Kulal*, p. 7-8.
533. *Rashahat*, p. 103.

At that point Amir Kulal noticed Samasi and was very much affected by his glance. He immediately abandoned the square and followed him. He aligned himself with him and participated in his talks"[534].

Amir Kulal spent approximately twenty years in the company and service of his master (may Allah have mercy on them both). Every Monday and Thursday, he would leave his village of Sukhari where he lived to go to Sammas to listen to his master and serve him. Whilst travelling this long journey he would occupy himself with *dhikrullah*[535].

Trained by Baba Samasi, Amir Kulal worked in this path in such a state of humility until he reached a rank of perfection and guidance of others, that no one was even aware of his state[536].

He was a dignified Friend of Allah with a sharp eye. However he was extremely humble and soft-mannered. He did not know what it was to object or be obstinate.

His taqwa and sense of justice

One day after performing the Friday prayer in Bukhara, Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on him) returned to his home in Sukhari with his disciples. When they arrived at Kalabad they saw a group of people sitting down on the grass. They were sitting around the Sultan Tamerlane. When Tamerlane saw Amir Kulal he immediately went to him and asked him to give him some advice[537].

Then after settling in Samarkand, Tamerlane invited Amir Kulal to Samarkand but he put forth his excuse and did not go. He sent his son to Tamerlane with the following message:

"My son, tell Tamerlane that if he wishes to walk in a path that is pleasing to Allah, Most High, let him not stray from taqwa and justice. Let these be the badge that he wears in order for him to be saved on the Day of Judgement. If

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534. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 11. *Rashahat*, p. 104; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazaratu al Quds*, I, vr. 114b-115a; Muhammad Talib, *Matlabu al Talibin*, vr. 22a-22b; Majduddin Badahshani, *Jami u Salasil*, p. 709.
535. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 14.
536. *Rashahat*, p. 104.
537. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 28-29.

he inclines towards this world, then he will not benefit from the prayers that were made for him".

Despite insisting on favouring him with certain gifts, Amir Kulal's son did not accept them and said:

"I heard my father say about you: "If he wants to engrave a place in the hearts of the great men of Allah, then let him not stray from taqwa and justice. This is the only way to meet with the mercy of Allah, Most High, on the Day of Judgement"[538].

His death

Amir Kulal lived a long life and even though he spent some time in Nasaf, he lived most of his life in the village of Sukhara near Bukhara. He passed away on the 8th day of Jamadi al awwal in 772 (28th November, 1370) on a Thursday in the predawn hours. He was buried in Sukhara[539].

With time his village began to be known as Amir Kulal but is now known as Yangi Hayat (may Allah have mercy on him)[540]. There was nothing more than a tall pillar to indicate the site of his grave but in 1996 a tomb was built by a Pakistani.

The most distinguishing features of the *Khwajagan*, the Masters, were their adab, their dignity, their extreme humility and modesty. For their entire life they took great care in earning their own livelihood with their own hands, and tried to live simple and humble lives. They purposefully did not want great tombs to be built for them after their death, which is why their graves were marked with nothing more than a few simple stones or a wooden pillar or column.

The character of these people of tasawwuf, who made it a principle to shun ostentation, required this. In addition, the fact that these masters did not wear unique or distinguishing clothes was a sign of their state of humility and modesty.

538. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 30-31; Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* X, 333.
539. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 60.
540. Sadriddin Selim Bukhari, *Bahauddin Naqshiband Yaki Yetti Pir*, s. 12.

His last words and testament

When Sayyid Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on him) was ill on his deathbed, his last words to his disciples were as follows:

“O my precious students! Never abandon your seeking of knowledge nor following the path of our beloved prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). This is the means to all happiness and bounty for the believer. This is why the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 17). That is, every Muslim, be they man or woman, is obliged to learn the matters of the religion needed for them. These are as follows:

1) Knowledge about faith and creed.

2) Knowledge about the prayer.

3) Knowledge about fasting.

4) If they are wealthy, they need knowledge of zakat and hajj.

5) They need to know the rights of the parents. The one who wishes Allah to be pleased with him, will please his parents. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “*Allah’s pleasure is gained by gaining the pleasure of one’s mother and father*” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 3/1899). This is why it is essential to observe the rights of one’s mother and father.

6) *Sila-i rahim*, that is to visit one’s relatives and look out for them.

7) To observe the rights of one’s neighbours.

8) To learn what is necessary for buying and selling.

9) To learn what is lawful (halal) and what is forbidden (haram).

These are matters that everyone must learn. Most people have been ruined because they had no knowledge and because they did not act upon what they knew.

Know well that to love this world, and those who are infatuated with it, is the greatest obstacle in walking in the path that is pleasing to Allah.

Always remember Allah and make mention of Him. In this way, you will not have exchanged your religion for your world. Fear Allah always. There is no act of worship that is more effective than fear of Allah.

Leave everything other than Allah. When you say "La Ilaha" know that there is nothing worthy of worship other than Allah and when you say "Illallah" know that Allah is above all faults and defects.

Know this that it is clean water that purifies one's clothes and it is *dhikr* that purifies the tongue. The body is purified by prayer and our wealth is purified by giving zakat.

Your path is purified by having people pleased with you.

Seek sincerity until you become a person of sincerity and seek salvation until you become saved.

The cleanliness of your heart, your tongue and your body is dependent on you eating from what is lawful. Know this well. The stomach of the one who eats from what is lawful is like a pool that collects pure water. Water from this pool is distributed to its surrounds and it is with this water that flowers are grown, and trees give fruit.

Make *tawbah*! One must repent and have good *adab*. Repent, as repentance is at the head of all acts of obedience. Repentance is not only with one's tongue. It is to be sorry for the sins that one has committed, to refrain from committing that sin again, and to make up for one's mistake by performing righteous deeds.

Always fear Allah, Most High. Be sorry for the sins that you have committed and weep so much and repent so much that you can truly be called a repenter.

We must regret our sins whilst still in this world and gain our hereafter by carrying out our duty of servanthood. This is the essence of the matter.

True love is to seek Allah's pleasure and to abandon evil acts, to be loyal to one's promise, and to fulfil one's trust, to see one's faults, to refrain from boasting about one's deeds, to ignore one's deeds, and to be ever busy with remembering Allah.

Never embark on any act without invoking the name of Allah (saying Bismillah) so that you will not be ashamed in the hereafter because of that act.

Obey the commands of Allah, Most High. Never distance yourself from seeking knowledge and performing righteous deeds, wherever you may be. Never abandon these, whatever may happen, and whatever difficulty you may encounter.

Carry out your duty of *amr bi'l ma'ruf and nahy al an-munkar*. Beware of those things that are forbidden by the religion, of matters that are inappropriate and of innovation (bid'a). It is said in a verse from the Qur'an:

'You who have faith! Safeguard yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones' (Tahrim, 66:6).

Fear greatly and be extremely cautious of being one of those people who are fuel for the fire of the hereafter.

Fudayl ibn Iyad says:

"On a day when the weather was extremely harsh and cold I saw Shaykh Abdullah. He was wearing very light clothing. Even though it was so cold, he was sweating profusely. I asked him:

"Why are you sweating in such cold weather?" He replied:

"Today a sin was committed in this place. I tried to prevent it but was unable to do so. Now as I look at this place I sweat from the pain and fear of how I am going to be saved from the responsibility on the Day of Judgement".

And us! We miss countless opportunities to carry out our duty of *amr bi'l ma'ruf* for ourself and for others. Just look at our state.

The head of all affairs is to cling to the commands of the religion and not transgress the limits placed by Allah, Most High.

The intelligent man ponders on his own state. He abides by the limits and rights of others. There are many verses which inform us of the punishment for those who do not abide by these rights. There is a particular measure that people must abide by, towards Allah and other people...every time and everywhere; whilst looking, speaking, listening, eating, and drinking...

See this opportunity as a treasure and carry out your duties to be a means for your salvation. Work to earn lawful livelihood. Earn only what is enough and avoid waste and miserliness. Act in accordance with the commands of the religion while earning your livelihood and spending your money.

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The best of affairs is that which is moderate and of the middle way" (Bayhaqi, *Shuab*, VIII, 275/5819).

Eat from what is lawful and from your own earnings. If you feel sleepy, sleep a little so that you will have rested in order to perform your worship and be able to obey Allah. But do not sleep without having remembered Allah.

O my students! The reason that people are deprived of their aim and of attaining happiness is that they have abandoned the path to the hereafter and have embraced this deceitful, illusory world. The one who wishes for happiness in the hereafter should have correct belief and should stay away from innovations and from misguidance. Act as if you will be taken to account for everything that you do.

O my friends! There is nothing worse than the believer who is not aware of the path that he is on. This state is evidence that one is heedless. Those things that others are unaware of have been opened up to the serious followers of this path. Their purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah. This is what they have attained.

Every century Allah, Most High, selects a great man from amongst his beloved servants. In this way he saves everyone from tribulation and disaster.

O my students! Be a student to such a master. In this way you can attain happiness in this world and the next.

Remain close to the scholars who are like the light-scattering candles of the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The Messenger of Allah said:

"The scholars (who have mastered the outer sciences and perfected the inner sciences) are the heirs of the prophets" (Abu Dawud, 'Ilm, 1).

Beware of not loving knowledge and men of knowledge for this is the way to salvation. Keeping company with the ignorant will distance you from

Allah. Stay away from the assembly of those who only act out the outer movements of the *sama* and who jump and hop. Do not sit with them. Company with them will kill the heart. This is why the masters of this path of ours have stayed away from this matter.

The state of the one who performs a true *sama* is as though you stab him with a knife yet he would be unaware due to his reverence and ecstasy. If this happens, then that person is truly in a state of the *sama*.

Stay away from using licence (ruhsah) and act with *azimah*. Acting upon the *ruhsah* is the act of weak people. If you want more advice than this look at the advice and writings of Abdul Khaliq Ghujduwani (may Allah have mercy on him). This is enough for now. A mere indication is sufficient for the one with intelligence"[541].

His words of wisdom

• "Even if you spend your nights in worship and your stomach becomes so thin from hunger, you will never attain your purpose if your food and your clothes are not from lawful means"[542].

• "Abandon the desires of your nafs so that you are not shamed and embarrassed in the hereafter. If you are grateful then Allah, Most High, will give you everything you ask for. Whatever we do in this world we will meet with its recompense in the hereafter.

O friends! Take care and be awake. As long as a person does not give up his desires and his whims, he is like a hunter in whose net no prey falls and who always returns empty handed. If a person forgets Allah, Most High, and delves into heedlessness, he will be subject to tribulation and misfortune.

What a shame that a person who is almost at the end of their life has delved into this world, and become a slave to their nafs and neglected and forgotten the road to the hereafter"[543].

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541. See Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 56-58; Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* X, 338-342.
542. Mawlana Shihabaddin *ibid,* p. 27.
543. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* X, 334.

• "O friends! Be sincere. If you carry out your every task seeking the pleasure of Allah you will be saved. Every act that is done without sincerity is like money that does not have the seal of the sultan on it. Nobody will accept it. But everyone will accept the one which does.

A few deeds done in sincerity are like a great number in the sight of Allah and a great number of acts done without sincerity have no worth in the sight of Allah. Carry out your every act of worship and your every affair with sincerity.

In this way you will be close to Allah and will have gained His pleasure.

Brave is the one who first considers well what he will do and then does it. In this way he will not be of those who are ashamed of what they have done[544].

• "As long as you are not freed of love of this world and of its ties, then the pot (your body) is of no use. In order to make a pot, they put it into the oven whilst it is complete. Some of the pots that go into the spiritual oven of tasawwuf come out sound and some come out broken (That is, they have not been cleared of their faults, and have not been saved from their carnal desires). We are hopeful yet about those pots that come out broken. We take them out and pound them to dust, mix them up with another clay remake the pot and put it back into the oven. We do this until it comes out sound. That is, we continue to train without wearying or becoming fed up"[545].

• "Look to winning hearts; serve those without strength. Protect the weak and broken-hearted. They are such people that they have no income from the people. Yet most of them leave with complete peace of heart, humility and remain meek. Seek out and find such people and serve them".

544. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* X, 338.
545. Muhammad Parsa, *The talks of Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshiband* p. 36.

16. Bahauddin Shah Naqshiband

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1318-1389]

Bahauddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the hijri year 718, in the month of Muharram in the village of Qasr al-Hinduvan, in Bukhara. His lineage reaches back to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) on his father's side and to Abu Bakr as Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) on his mother's side[546].

When he was young he used to be an engraver together with his father and so he became famous for the name Naqshiband (*Naqsh* means engraving). In some works it is said that because Shah Naqshiband was continuously occupied with *khafi dhikr*, the word 'Allah' was engraved upon his heart and so he became known by the title 'Naqshiband', the engraver"[547].

Before he was born, Baba Sammasi (my Allah have mercy on him) would frequently go to Qasr al-Hinduvan and say in his talks:

"Very soon this place called Qasr al-Hinduvan will become Qasr al-Arifan" (Salahaddin ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anisu al-Talibin,* p. 36)[548].

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546. Nasiruddin Bukhari, *Tuhfatu al Zairin*, p. 54; Sadriddin Selim Bukhari, *Bahauddin Naqshiband Yaki Yetti Pir*, s. 13; a. mlf., *Teberruk Ziyâretgâhlar*, Tashkent 1993, p. 25.
547. Shirazi, *Taraiqu al Haqaiq*, II, 351.
548. Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, the author of *Anisu al Talibin* affiliated himself with Shah Naqshiband through Alauddin Attar in the year 785 (1383). Whilst he was alive, Shah Naqshiband did not give permission for such a work to be published, however after his death, they began to publish it after performing various prayers of istikhara and having received a spiritual indication. The author has compiled the statements heard personally by his closest khilafahs and murids after attending his talks, and the spiritual states that they witnessed. Thus it contains information about Shah Naqshiband from the original sources. This is why it was the most important reference for such famous books as *Rashahat* and *Nafahat*.

Shah Naqshiband has the following to say about those days:

“One of the greatest favours of Allah Most High upon me was that I was honoured with the blessed gaze of Master Sammasi during my childhood and his spiritual adoption of me”[549].

“When Master Sammasi passed away, my grandfather took me to Samarkand. Whenever my grandfather would hear of a dervish of the heart he would immediately take me to him and request, and practically beg that they do not withdraw their beautiful gaze from me. and they would complement me”[550].

In his youth Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently visit the blessed tombs of the great men of Bukhara. One night when he was visiting one of these tombs, he saw that even though the lantern was filled with oil, the light was weak because the wick was not moving. From there he went to Mazar-i Mazdahin.

Whilst he was sitting facing the Qiblah he was suddenly overcome by a state of ‘*ghaybah*’[551]. He saw a man whose face was veiled sitting on a large throne with many people surrounding him. When he saw Baba Sammas (may Allah have mercy on him) in that gathering he realised that these were the Friends of Allah who had passed away. One of those Friends came to Shah Naqshiband and told him that the man sitting on the throne was Abdul Khaliq Ghujduwani and that those around him were his successors. He then named each of them one by one. When it came to Baba Sammas he said:

“You saw him while he was still alive. He is your shaykh and he gave you a hat in trust from Ali Ramitani”.

Then that gathering said:

“Listen well! The master Abdul Khaliq Ghujduwani will teach you what is essential in your *sayr al suluq*”.

Abdul Khaliq lifted the veil from his face and informed him of the beginning, middle and end of training in tasawwuf.

549. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 35.
550. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 37.
551. **Gaybat**: Is a state in which one’s heart loses all ties with the physical world.

Thus Naqshiband was known as *Uwaysi*, since he received knowledge and prosperity from the spirit of Ghujdawani in this way and his true murshid is accepted as being Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani, who lived one hundred years before him[552].

These are some of the words spoken by Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) at that time:

"Those lanterns that you saw are a sign for you. You have great potential upon this path, but your wick (your capabilities) has to be set into action so that the unknown becomes clear and the mysteries can be uncovered. Also you need to perform righteous deeds in accordance with your capacity so that you can reach your aim".

Then the Master spoke the following words with great emphasis:

"In all states and circumstances one must walk in the path of the *shariah* and uprightness (*istiqama*) and abide by the divine commands and prohibitions. One should prefer *azimah* in one's deeds and follow the Sunnah of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). One should stay away from the *ruhsah* and from innovations and take as their guide the hadith and seek out and strive to learn about any news or transmissions of the Prophet and His Companions.

When Ghujdawani had finished giving his advice, his successors asked Khwaja Bahauddin to take the skullcap that belonged to Ali Ramitani from his home and take it to Amir Kulal who was in Nasaf. In addition they informed him of some events that he would see along the way as a sign of the truthful-

552. Uways al Qarani, from Yemen, was subject to the prophetic compliment of the Messenger of Allah, and benefited from his spirit, even though he never saw him. On account of this, in tasawwuf, a person who does not physically see their perfect guide but benefits from their spirit and blessings in the spiritual realm is called '*Uwaysi*' and this method is called 'the method of *Uways*'.
Ubaydullah Ahrar said:
"Before Islam there was a group of righteous people who would set up of spiritual assemblies, without using language, and communicate with each other. They were called Burhiyan. From the time of the appearance of the religion of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), people with these traits began to be known as Uways".
Burhiyan means to be connected to Burh-i Aswad. According to narrations, Burh-i Aswad was a black slave who had reached the state of muhabbatullah in the time of the prophet Musa. He was the equivalent of Uways al Qarani in the time of the Bani Israil. (*Rashahat*, p. 127)

ness of this event. Then they shook him a little and Khwaja Bahauddin came back to his senses[553].

Shah Naqshiband immediately set out to do what he had been told. He felt honoured to be at the service of Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on them both). Amir Kulal inspired Shah Naqshiband to continue to perform *dhikr* and the *kalimat al-tawheed* (*nafy u isbat dhikr*) in a silent manner. In accordance with the command that he received from Ghujdawani in the state of *ghaybah,* Shah Naqshiband carried out his deeds with *azimah* and did not perform vocal *dhikr*[554]. However he did not oppose nor speak out against either *dhikr jahri* or the *sama*. In regards to this matter he would say:

"We do not occupy ourselves with this matter but we also do not speak against it"[555].

Shah Naqshiband would carry out his teacher's every command immediately and with great care and felt obliged to serve all creatures of Allah with great sincerity.

He speaks of his state from his initial days:

"Wherever there was something being discussed I was all ears. If the words were relevant to the spiritual path I would receive great pleasure but if they were about another matter I would be extremely grieved and saddened"[556].

Once he had reached a certain state of maturity, Amir Kulal left the spiritual training of his son Amir Burhan to Shah Naqshiband and wanted to see for himself that he was capable of guiding others[557].

Eventually Amir Kulal saw that Naqshiband had reached a very high spiritual station and had the potential to go even higher and one day he said to him:

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553. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 41-42; Parsa, *Qudsiyya*, p. 8-10, 14; Abu al Qasim, *al Risalatu al Bahaiyya*, vr. 13b-14b; Muhammad Bakir, *Makamat*, p. 11-12; Muhammad Qadi, *Silsilat al Arifin*, vr. 43b-44b; Ali Asgar Mu'iniyan, "Aya Khwaja Bahauddin Muhammad Naqshiband-i Bukhari al Majzuban-i Salikast", *Gevher*, II/8 (1353 hş./1974), p. 740-742.
554. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 43; Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 15a-b; Muhammad Bakir, ibid, p. 14.
555. Muhammed Bakir, ibid, p. 41; *Rashahat*, p. 139.
556. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 53.
557. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 387-388.

"My son Bahauddin, I have carried out to the letter the last request of my teacher in regards to you".

Then he pointed to his breast and continued:

"I have transferred to you whatever is in my breast. Your bird of spirituality has finally emerged from the egg of humanity. Your bird of aspiration is now flying high. I now give you permission. Whenever you find someone from whom the scent of spirituality reaches you, pay attention to him and do not neglect to benefit from him in accordance with your spiritual hunger"[558].

His life of guiding others

When Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) began his task of guiding others he was living in the village of Qasr-i Arifan in which he was born. He would also go to give talks in the region of Maveraunnehir next to Bukhara, to towns such as Nasaf, Kharwizm and Karmina[559]. Having heard about his perfections and virtues there, people would come from large cities such as Samarkand to listen to his talks or align themselves with him[560].

The affiliation of Husamaddin Khwaja Yusuf, one of the leading scholars of Bukhara with Shah Naqshiband was an important turning point. After that many of the scholars and students of Bukhara came in groups to attend the circle of Naqshiband[561].

Shah Naqshiband went to Hajj two or three times[562]. The day he returned from his first pilgrimage was the day that his teacher Amir Kulal passed away. Before he passed away he told his disciples to follow Khwaja Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on them)[563].

Shah Naqshiband relates an incident that occurred at hajj:

558. Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 42a; Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 387; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 34; *Rashahat*, p. 121-122.
559. Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 123a, 104a, 108a-109a, 127b, 130b, 131a; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 141, 158, 173.
560. Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 157-158.
561. See Abu al Qasim, ibid, vr. 75a-b; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 79-81.
562. See Abu al Qasim, ibid, vr. vr. 62b; *Rashahat* p. 113; Hani *al Hadaiq*, p. 404.
563. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 194; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 36; *Rashahat*, p. 122.

"I saw two people in Mecca; one of them had a very high *himmah* and the other, in total contrast was very weak. During the tawaf the one who was weak attached himself to the door of the Baytullah. At such an honourable place and such a precious time he was asking for certain things other than Allah.

The person I saw whose *himmah* was quite high was a young man in the market of Mina. He made purchases to the value of approximately 50000 *filori* (an old unit of currency) but he never remained heedless of Allah for one instant. When I saw that youth's efforts the blood rushed to my heart (thinking of my own faults)"[564].

His sensitivity in eating lawful provision

Shah Naqshiband would place great importance on lawful provision. He also displayed great care in avoiding that which was doubtful. In his talks he would frequently cite the hadith:

"Worship is ten parts; nine of those are to ask for lawful provision and one is the other acts"[565] [566].

Khwaja would produce his own food from agriculture. Every year he would grow a certain amount of barley, black-eyed peas, and wild apricots. He took great care in making sure that the animals, field, seed and water he used on his farm were all lawful. This is why many scholars would join his talks in order to take the blessing of eating from his meals prepared of lawful origins.[567]

Naqshiband would not eat from the table of kings nor would he accept their gifts. The wife of King Hussain once sent him some robes which she had embroidered with her own hands. Despite all her insistence Shah Naqshiband would not accept them, even though at that time all he had to wear was a shirt made of felt. His turban and his shoes were also very old[568].

One time one of the scholars of Bukhara asked him:

"How does one gain peace of heart in the prayer?"

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564. *Rashahat*, p. 473.
565. Daylami, *Musnad al Firdaws,* III, 107/4062.
566. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 63.
567. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 64; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 37, 112, 138; *Rashahat*, p. 159, 184.
568. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 65, 67.

He replied:

“One should eat from what is lawful and be mindful whilst eating. If one is mindful at times other than the prayer, when one performs one’s ablutions or utters the *takbir* of *iftitah*, then one can attain peace of the heart during prayer.”[569]

One time one of his students complained that he was losing his spiritual state and he said to him:

“Investigate very well whether what you are eating is lawful or not”.

When his student did in fact go and investigate, he found that some of the wood that was used to cook his food was of doubtful origins and he immediately repented[570].

Shah Naqshiband placed great importance on earning his livelihood with his own hands and he said about this matter:

“A person who relies upon Allah should not see his own *nafs* and should hide his *tawakkul* by working”[571].

He lived by the principle of working in worldly matters to earn his livelihood and not be dependent upon anyone but at the same time not being heedless of Allah, Most High.

He would warn of heedlessness

Most of the time Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would personally cook his food or prepare the table. He would continually advise the dervishes to be awake when eating and to maintain presence of heart. If he saw any of his disciples take a bite of food to his mouth in a state of heedlessness he would immediately caution him gently and his heart was not content that they ate even one bite in such a state.

If a meal happened to be prepared in anger, unwillingly or by force, he did not eat it nor was he pleased when his followers did:

569. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 84.
570. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* III, 441.
571. Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 70.

"There is darkness in this food and it is not suitable for us to eat from it"[572].

One day they had gone to the region of Gadivat.

A dervish brought them a meal. Shah Naqshiband said:

"It is not suitable for us to eat this food for it has been prepared in a state of anger. The one who sifted the flour, kneaded it and then cooked it was very angry when doing so".

If he saw someone place a ladle of food into a pot in anger or grudgingly he would not eat that food and would say:

"There is no good nor blessings in something that is done in anger, in heedlessness, grudgingly or by force. For it has become tainted by the whims of the *nafs* and with Satan".

Righteous deeds and good behaviour are only possible through lawful provision. Furthermore, lawful provision should be eaten not in heedlessness but with presence of the heart and in a state of wakefulness. Abiding by the principle of *wuquf-i qalbi* at all times and struggling to remain aware and conscious at all times will be like spiritual exercise for a person, and it will be a means for presence of the heart during prayer[573].

One time when he heard some of his students talking vainly, whilst heating the water to be used for cleaning and ablutions, he cautioned them as follows:

"Do you not know even this much? When cooking and when heating water one should prepare one's heart and protect one's tongue from useless words. This state will bring about a state of presence of the heart and awareness in the person who eats that food or performs ablution with that water. As for the heart of the one who takes ablution from water that has been heated in

572. We should take note of the following matter: These states and others seen in Shah Naqshiband and other *ahl ul ullah* are the states of discernment, insight and unveilings reached by them on account of the state of their heart.
Consequently for a person who has not reached such a state to make similar comments seeing themselves in his station, is completely wrong. One should shun such highly veiled words which are mixed with riya. Otherwise those who superficially imitate the words of stations that they have not reached will meet with spiritual harm.

573. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 64-65; *Rashahat,* p. 513.

heedlessness or eats food which has been cooked in heedlessness, it will be filled with darkness and heedlessness will arise”[574].

Knowledge and Action

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As ordered by Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani I tried to investigate the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be up on him) and any news of the Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). I attended the assemblies of the scholars and took lessons of hadith and learned of the transmissions of the Companions. I acted upon each of these and by the grace of Allah I was able to witness their effects on me”[575].

While serving at the Sufi lodge on the one hand Shah Naqshiband also continued to study in the madrasah. He says:

“I was learning tafsir and hadith from Diggerani (Kishlaki). At that time I happened to go to Nasaf. My teacher was gardening. Since there were quite a lot of tamarisk trees, we needed an axe. My teacher said:

“Our axe was left with Husamaddin Efendi in Bukhara”. I immediately understood what he meant. Without them knowing, I went to Bukhara the next day and brought back their axe”[576].

Shah Naqshiband would place great importance on Hakim Tirmidhi (who passed away in 320 hijri) and benefitted greatly from his spirit, his ideas and his works.

He would continually converse with all of the scholars and righteous men who were his contemporaries. One day he went to visit one of the great scholars of that time, Hamiduddin Shashi (may Allah have mercy on him). He said to him:

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574. *Rashahat,* p. 513.
575. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 44.
576. See *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 52; *Rashahat,* p. 118; Mawlana Shihabaddin, *Agahi-yi Sayyid Amir Kulal*, p. 34-36.

"The kernel is protected by the shell. If there is a sickness in the shell, this will contaminate the kernel". Mawlana Hamiduddin was left in awe of these words. Shah Naqshiband continued:

"We are people who harvest the virtuous fruits from our precious scholars"[577].

One of the scholars of that time, Khwaja Yusuf would attend the assembly of Shah Naqshiband from time to time and he would solve any problems of the dervishes if there was a need"[578].

Alauddin Attar said:

The attention, love, loyalty and enthusiasm of the great scholars of that time for Shah Naqshiband was very great indeed.

In fact many students and great teachers would abandon their madrasah and even return any property belonging to the foundation given to them for their services, in order to attend his talks day and night.

One day a great number of scholars from Bukhara gathered together in the presence of Shah Naqshiband. Some bigoted people amongst them said:

"In our madrasahs today there is no brightness of knowledge nor any study left. No importance is given to educated debates, investigation or research. Most students have inclined to your way and left the pleasure of knowledge and study and retreated to the corner of *fana* and lassitude. What is this state?"

Shah Naqshiband replied:

"O assembly of noble scholars! We are devoted to you in the path of the sharia and we follow you in this path. We follow whatever you transmit to us from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). If there is anything about our way that is in opposition to the Sunnah of the prophet, then show us, and we will abandon it. Caution us in accordance with the verse: '**Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know"** (Anbiya, 21:7) and let us know if we are on the path of guidance or not".

All of the scholars responded:

577. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 277-278.
578. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 539.

"We have investigated your way from all aspects. There is nothing in it which is not in line with the Sunnah of the prophet".

However there was a scholar by the name of Molla Hord amongst them and he said:

"The robe that you wear is a means of fame in two respects. The first is that the robe is something that the dervishes are most proud of and the other is that by wearing it you consider yourselves distinguished from others. Is this allowed? Those things which cause a person to desire fame will lead them to disaster".

Shah Naqshiband replied:

"This robe that we wear is not something so precious that it will lead to a desire for fame or distinctiveness. It is the average robe of the dervish. However, since it has become a cause of gossip we will no longer wear it".

He immediately took it off and presented it as a gift to one of the dervishes there".

The scholars from Bukhara who had witnessed this and many other virtues and displays of good character from Shah Naqshiband, finally said:

"Just as the eye needs both the black and white parts in order to see, we too are in need of you"[579].

One time Shah Naqshiband was asked:

"If a person studies 'logic' with what intention should he study it?" He replied:

"He should study it with the intention of distinguishing truth from falsehood"[580].

Shah Naqshiband received solid training in hadith and he would frequently explain many hadith in his talks and he would make expositions from tasawwuf. He knew Arabic, Turkish and Persian[581].

579. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 278-279.
580. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 106.
581. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 38, 54, 57, 77-113, 249-250; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 168.

His uprightness (istiqama)

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“One should not incline towards extraordinary acts or *karamat*. The real skill is to be upright”[582].

“One should only trust extraordinary states and wonder-working when one’s deeds are upright and one is in accordance with the Sunnah. If one is not in accordance with the Sunnah then one should not trust in his miracles”[583].

He used to narrate the following words from one of the friends of Allah:

“If a *wali* happens to enter a garden and every leaf in that garden calls out to him: “O friend of Allah”, he should not heed that voice, neither outwardly nor inwardly. On the contrary, he should increase his efforts and take even more care to be in a state of servanthood, *taqwa* and supplication to Allah. The rank of perfection in this station is particular to Muhammad Mustafa (peace and blessings be upon him). The Messenger of Allah was subject to countless bounties and favours of his Lord and these only served to increase his state of servanthood, seeking refuge with Allah and his supplication to Him and he would say: “Shall I not be a grateful slave?” (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 16)”[584].

Shah Naqshiband would relate the following beautiful words from Sulami (may Allah have mercy on them both):

“Seek uprightness and do not seek wonder-working! Your Lord desires uprightness from you, but it is your *nafs* that desires wonder-working”[585].

In order to protect himself from the compliments of mere mortals, Shah Naqshiband would hide his miracles. One day he was asked to show some wonder-working and he said:

“Our wonders are here for everyone to see. Look – we are still able to walk the earth even though we have such a load of sin upon our shoulders”[586].

582. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 88.
583. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 26.
584. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 88; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 57.
585. Sulami, *Haqaiqu al Tafsir, [*Hud, 12]; *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 88.
586. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 112; Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 58a.

When his disciples would mention some of the wonders they saw from him he would say:

"They are the *wonders* of my disciples, not mine"[587].

Whenever some extraordinary wonders were observed about him, he would always warn his dervishes as follows:

"O my friends! We have no control over this. That is, these do not occur through our seeking or desiring them. They are from Allah. No such things can come from something that is destitute, bankrupt, weak, and completely deficient.

Another time he said:

"Even though the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was the most perfect of all created beings, the closest to Allah, and all of his prayers were accepted, he was told by Allah:

'**and you did not throw, when you threw; it was Allah who threw**' (Anfal, 8:17).

In that case we should think of the state of his community, how wretched and weak they are. There is no share in the extraordinary acts that can be seen appearing from dervishes. Maybe those states are there in order to open up the horizons of those who seek Allah."[588]

"Not everyone who runs will catch their prey. Only the one who constantly follows their prey will catch it. Thus, we need to be upright and continuous in our acts"[589].

Straying even an inch from uprightness has an immediate effect upon one's spiritual state. Shah Naqshiband says:

"Any sort of slip or erring on the part of a friend of Allah is a result of a fault in his humility"[590].

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587. Ahmad Qasani, *Adabu al Saliqin*, vr. 58a.
588. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 156.
589. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 103.
590. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 88.

His following of the Sunnah

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would summarise his tariqa as 'following the words of the Messenger of Allah and of his Companions'. He received great pleasure from applying the Sunnah to every aspect of his life[591]. This was to such a degree that when his son passed away he said:

"Praise be to Allah, this too is from the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. He saw his own children pass away while he was still alive. Most of the states that befell the Messenger of Allah have also befallen us"[592].

It is because of the efforts and sensitivity to act in accordance with the Sunnah of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that Bahauddin Naqshiband was known as "مُحْيِي سُنَنِ سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ/ (The Reviver of the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah) and مُوَضِّحِ اٰثَارِ الصَّحَابَةِ / (The Expounder of the path of the Blessed Companions)[593].

One time Shah Naqshiband advised Yaqub Charkhi:

"Try as best as you can to act upon the following hadith of the Messenger of Allah: "Keep up your contact with your relatives even though they cut their ties with you give to those who do not give to you, and forgive the one who oppresses you"[594]. All of these are in opposition to the *nafs* but when applied bring great benefit"[595].

His worship

Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was very meticulous when it came to worship. He narrates an example of this:

"When it was made possible for me to repent I was living in the village of Rivertun. I would show great care in performing my prayers in congregation at the masjid. One time by chance I was unable to perform my prayer in the congregation. The imam of that masjid was very pious and knowledgeable. He said to me:

591. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 64, 89-90, 93, 188, 198, 249, 277; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 58.
592. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 261.
593. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 19.
594. Ahmad, IV, 158.
595. Yaqub Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 116.

"I always saw you standing in prayer, and I considered you to be a brave man who continued to perform prayer in congregation. However, now I see that you are one who neglects the congregational prayer".

I responded:

"Sir, you imagined me to be one who stands in the prayer ranks but in reality I am of those whose hearts are veiled.

May Allah have mercy on him I heard the following lines from that great man:

"In the market of love, no one would purchase a dirty heart. A pure heart is needed in order for it to come out of the fire clean".

These words weighed down upon me. That fire burned in my heart always and that state of indecisiveness continued and increased"[596].

Shah Naqshiband expressed the importance of worship in the path of spiritual perfection:

"Metaphors are bridges to reality". What is meant by this is that all forms of worship, apparent, inner, spoken and active are metaphors. Those who enter this tariq will not reach the truth unless they take care in all of these forms and pass this stage (as long as they travel from the stage of faith (iman) to *ihsan*)"[597].

Another time he said:

"One should continue to occupy oneself with inner study and supererogatory worship in the dawn and after the evening prayer (Maghrib)"598.

His humility and selflessness

When the occasion arose Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would say the following:

"The most profitable of those who travel in this elevated path (tariq) are those who are in a state of complete humility, entreaty and supplication

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596. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 40.
597. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 108.
598. .Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid*, p. 95.

to Allah and who have high aspirations. This is the door through which they made us pass. Whatever I have found, I have found through entreaty, being in a state of selflessness and humility"[599].

His following words are an illustration of this state:

The world is wheat and I am the chaff
Everyone else is good whilst I am bad

In reality, the mystery that allowed these Friends of Allah to reach their peak was this state of humility, selflessness and unassuming nature. This is why the Sufis said: "When you get out of the way, what is left is the One who created you".

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said that the way to progress in the path towards Allah depended on dressing oneself in the robe of humility and selflessness and wiping away the rust and dirt from the ego in one's heart:

"To enwrap oneself in nothingness on this path and to abandon one's own being and present one's selflessness and be humble is a great profit. These are the clues to attaining a great state"[600].

"Those who have dedicated themselves to this path must consider their own *nafs* to be one hundred times worse than the Pharoah. Otherwise they cannot be considered to have embarked upon this path"[601].

We should state here that since the Pharaoh was an unbeliever, no believer can ever be considered lower than him in the sight of Allah. However, Shah Naqshiband used such an exaggerative expression in order to illustrate how great a threat the *nafs* is for one's eternal life,

Moreover, the end-affair of every human being remains unknown to us. In this regard then, even though a person can be as violent in his unbelief as the Pharaoh was, there is the possibility that he can be guided at his last breath and be cleansed of all his sins. This is why the believer must be meticulous and avoid belittling other servants of Allah and the heedlessness of considering himself superior to them.

599. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 46.
600. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 47.
601. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 48.

The following event is a good illustration of the state of humility and nothingness of Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him):

One time Shah Naqshiband went to a place called Kufin. His own disciples and a great crowd from the people of that town were following him. Seeing that he had drawn the attention of so many people the Shah began to weep. Those who saw him also began to weep however they did not know why he was crying. A little while later, Shah addressed himself as an expression of his own selflessness and humility before the Divine Greatness:

"I am in a state of desolation, incapacity, exhaustion and incompetence and am not worthy of even greeting anyone or receiving their greeting of peace. Allah, Most High, has not humiliated me amongst the people and has made them occupy themselves with me".

"No one knows my state". He continued to weep very sadly and then recited some lines, which meant the following:

"If they truly knew me they would cast me out of their town. Woe to me. Nobody knows my true state"[602].

This is the tenderness and sensitivity of the heart that elevated these Friends of Allah to such a state. So whenever one senses one's own ego rise one should immediately seek refuge in Allah and try to rid himself of it and take great care against this state.

❁

One time a disciple from Nasaf had an argument with his neighbour and offended him. Shah Naqshiband was very upset by this and he travelled to Nasaf from Bukhara. As soon as he entered the city he went straight to the house of that offended man and knocked on his door. In great humility he made the following request:

"Please forgive us this sin, the fault is ours". As a result he appeased the neighbour of his disciple. The coming to Nasaf of Naqshiband all the way from Bukhara just to placate a broken heart astonished the people of Nasaf and many of them became his disciples[603].

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602. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 80.
603. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 209.

One of the sincere students of Shah Naqshiband, Musafir Khwarazmi narrates:

“One day Khwaja Bahauddin was constructing a building for some service. All of the dervishes were present and were all covered in dirt, working very carefully. Muhammad Parsa had been given the duty of mixing the mud. The sun had reached its peak and it was very hot. Shah Naqshiband gave the command to his workers to rest for a while. Everyone washed their hands and feet and went to sit in the shade. Since they were so tired they fell asleep where they were. Muhammad Parsa also fell asleep in the place where he was mixing the mud. While they were in this state Shah Naqshiband looked at every one of them. He then went to the side of Muhammad Parsa. When he saw him in this state he was moved and he wiped his blessed face over the feet of Muhammad Parsa and prayed as follows: “O Allah. Have mercy on Bahauddin for the sake of these feet”[604].

❁

Alauddin Attar narrates:

“There is no other hope for salvation other than to perceive your own weakness and repent. The traveller should always see the deficiency in his own deeds and his own shortcomings. He should consider his own repentance from his own weakness and sins and seek refuge in Allah, believing Him to be One of grace and favour. Shah Naqshiband would command his students to this state and say: “I was continually reminded of these attributes”[605].

❁

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The way of the people of the heart is to see their righteous deeds as few, to be in a state of humility, nothingness, and weakness and to know that one’s deeds are faulty and one’s state defective. There is no other beneficial way of breaking one’s ego than to see oneself as lacking and to see one’s own shortcomings. This is one of the wisdoms, which in fact even the prophets erred in.

604. *Rashahat*, p. 139.
605. *Rashahat*, p. 175-176.

The reality of repentance is this: to perceive one's own incapacity by abandoning one's feelings of arrogance, pride and ego, which are the origins of sin. This comes about by recognising the selfish nature of the *nafs* and realising the danger it brings to one's spirituality. While in this state of pain and incapacity one can plead with Allah and beg Him wholeheartedly. This is the reality of repentance.

"O my Lord! People fear you, but I fear myself. From You, my Lord, I have seen only good but from myself I have seen nothing but bad".

A fault coming about in the people of Allah is due to their annihilating their own *nafs* and ego. This is one of the wisdoms in the prophet Musa objecting to Khidr (peace be upon them both) on the basis of his devotion to the Shariah. The prophet Musa realised his objections were wrong and his ego vanished"[606].

❁

Khwaja Husamaddin Yusuf wished to compile and write down the words and anecdotes of Naqshiband while he was still alive, however; Shah Naqshiband did not give him permission, which is another indication of his high level of humility[607].

His generosity

Shah Naqshiband gave no importance to worldly wealth and preferred to live as a poor man. Despite this he was still extremely generous, and would give much charity to people. If somebody gave him a gift he would offer a similar gift in return or something much better, in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

His followers who attended his talks could also be seen to have these traits. If a friend or guest happened to visit one of his disciples, who were trained with this character, they would prepare a meal (without too much trouble) and offer them whatever they had. In fact, they would even show altruism that is they would prefer their brothers in religion above their own selves, and would not hesitate to offer something that they were in need of

606. Parsa, *Subhbah*, p. 68-69.
607. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 20.

themselves. For instance, when one of their guests stayed for the night, they would give them their own item of clothing to wear and would endure the cold weather without making this known to their guest[608].

His service

One time Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) told his students that he had cleaned all of the toilets in all of the madrasas of Bukhara in order to encourage them to serve others. He then continued saying:

"My master advised me of the following: "Be careful about the hearts. Serve those who have fallen, the weak and broken-hearted. Pay attention to those whom the people belittle and be humble and modest with them". I then occupied myself with such acts of service as indicated by my teacher. Then my master turned to me and said:

"Take care of the animals with humility and attention. The animals are also creatures of Allah (Observe His manifestations in them. Try to look at them with the glance of compassion shown to them by their Creator). Occupy yourself with treating the sick and injured".

Upon his command I took up the duty of taking care of animals. I continued like this for a while. If an animal happened to pass before me I would allow him to pass first. My days continued like this for seven years. Again that dearest master turned to me and said:

"Take sincere care of the dogs of this blessed lodge and search for one who will expand your horizons of happiness.

I considered this act of service to be a goldmine and I embraced it fully. One night I saw a dog. A completely different state overcame me. Beside him, I supplicated and pleaded with Allah. I began to weep and sob uncontrollably. While I was in that state, that poor dog laid down on his back and turned his face towards the sky. He raised his front legs and began to whimper mournfully. I then raised my hands and supplicated and said: "Amen". This continued until he was silent and returned to his normal state...

My dearest teacher again turned to me and said:

608. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 64.

"Occupy yourself with the roads and passes. If you see something on a path that is an obstacle for people, remove it so that those passing by are not harmed by it".

Then I began to occupy myself with this act of service. It was such that I was constantly covered in dirt for seven years. I carried out with great fidelity every act that the Friend of Allah ordered me to do. I was able to observe the result of those acts upon my own state"[609].

Shah Naqshiband would carry firewood on his back to the lodge of Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on them both). Again while the village mosque was being built, he would carry the mud mix on his head and would read some lines, which had the following meaning:

"O Allah! I would gladly do anything in Your Path. O mosque, I would carry your load upon my head"[610].

Alauddin Attar said:

"My teacher Shah Naqshiband's character was very elevated. If a friend happened to visit him in his house, he would serve him personally and offer him in the best way, taking all manner of care to host him. He would also look after the mount of his guest with great care to the degree that his friend was no longer worried about his animal"[611].

One of the disciples of Shah Naqshiband, Shaykh Shadi, narrates:

"Whenever a friend or guest arrived, Shah Naqshiband would serve him and then prepare water and food for his animal. He would consider all acts of service to be a bounty for him. Even if some of his own dervishes whom he was training came to visit him, he himself would prepare their water for cleaning and say: "All of these acts of service are an obligation on me".

Whenever Shah Naqshiband would honour one of his disciples with a visit to their house he would ask about his children, his relatives, his servants, his animals and even his chickens. He would compliment them all and endeavour to please them"[612.]

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609. See. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 49-50; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid,* p. 17-18.
610. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 52; *Rashahat*, p. 121.
611. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 70.
612. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 71; Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 46b; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 38.

Whenever a meal was being prepared in an assembly he would serve it to those who had cooked it[613].

One of his students narrates:

"The reason that I devoted myself to Shah Naqshiband with all my heart is this:

One day the dervishes from Bukhara came to visit Khwaja who was ill. I joined them. We saw Shah Naqshiband in a place called Bagh-i Mezar. Even though he was ill, he still greeted us with a smile. He immediately went to prepare the lambs that would be slaughtered. In fact, he himself carried one of the lambs on his shoulders and he cooked it himself. This beautiful character of his made me his servant"[614].

Shah Naqshiband would make efforts to solve everyone's problems. This is why he was known as 'Khwaja-i Mushkil-ghusha', that is, the "Master who solves difficult problems"[615].

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) narrates:

"The true friends of Allah bear the burden and troubles of the people in order to beautify their character. There is no heart which is not observed by Allah, whether the owner of that heart knows it or not! And so the people of Allah bear the burden of others so that they can succeed in pleasing the heart. Thus may they then hope to benefit from the Divine observation of them"[616].

He gave great importance to *suhbah*

One of the dervishes narrates:

"At every opportunity Shah Naqshiband would tell us that the *suhbah* of the friends of Allah was a great bounty and that 'to stay away from this bounty is a fault of the traveller of this path'. When this weak servant travelled from Samarkand to Bukhara to listen to him speak I saw that the most important thing for his students was to perform the prayer in congregation in the masjid

613. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 198; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 153.
614. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 145.
615. Kavak, *Divan Mawlana Khalid-i Baghdadi*, bayt: 136-137.
616. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 100.

as much as they could and to benefit from the spirituality that radiated from his talks"[617].

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would say:

"A person finds more peace of heart when he serves the people, then when he retreats in solitude (That is, he attains unity within multiplicity and if he can be with Allah whilst he is in a crowd, then his heart finds even more peace). This is how the realm of the heart develops on this path. Our way is the way of *suhbah*. There is fame in seclusion and in fame can only come disaster. Goodness and bounty comes from being together and unified. It is possible to be together through the *suhbah*. However the *suhbah* must be beneficial. This arises when a person abandons their ego and enwraps themselves in selflessness"[618].

"In the hearts of some of those who come to our talks there is the seed of love, however due to their concern for the world and the impurity that results, their seedling does not develop and grow.

Our duty is to cleanse their hearts of these worldly and carnal desires and to nourish the seed of love. In some hearts, however there is only a trace of the seed of love and then we strive to make love form there"[619].

His Death

During his old age Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) went for the pilgrimage once more. He became ill on his return.

One of his students narrates:

"Shah Naqshiband would remember death often. Especially in his last days he would remember his past elders and say: "How beautiful is the realm of the hereafter to which our friends have gone". At a time close to his death, he repeated often the following hadith narrated by Aisha, the wife of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

617. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 291.
618. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 90; *Rashahat*, p. 68; Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 52a, 62a.
619. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 90; Abu al Qasim, *ibid*, vr. 63b; Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 59.

“My great prophet brothers (the five Prophets of Resolution) and the other blessed messengers suffered greater and more intense tribulations than this. In that state they went and were reunited with their Lord. Almighty Allah offered them great things and bestowed upon them many rewards. I would be embarrassed to elevate my standard of living in this world. If I do so, my share in the hereafter may decrease and I will lag behind my brothers. To be patient for a few days in this world is more pleasing to me than decreasing my share of the hereater. For me, at this moment there is nothing more pleasant than to be reunited with my Companions and my brothers” (Ghazzali, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, III, 82)”[620].

Alauddin Attar narrates:

“During the last moments of the Shah we were reciting chapter Yasin from the Qur’an. When we came half way, the lights began to appear. Shah proclaimed the *kalima-i tawheed* and then gave his last breath. He had lived 73 years and had begun his 74th year. He passed away on a Monday night on the 3rd day of the month of Rabia al-Awwal in 791 (1st March, 1389)”[621].

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was buried in his garden at Qasr-i Arifan. He had requested that the following lines be read while his coffin was being carried:

مُفْلِسَانِيمْ آمَدَه دَرْ كُوىِ تُو

شَيْأً لِلّٰهْ اَزْ جَمَالِ رُوىِ تُو

We are the bankrupt who come to Your village

Show us some of your beauty!

Abdul Quddus, one of the great friends of Allah, tells of one of his visions[622] as follows:

620. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 292.
621. *Rashahat*, p. 124.
622. Spiritual states of unveilings can never define an absolute ruling. Imam Rabbani said: “There are great mistakes to be made in unveilings. Who can truly know what a person of unveiling sees or understands?” (*Maktubat,* volume 1, 256th letter). The real measure in this matter are the rulings that have been accepted by the ahl al sunnah wa al jama’. That is, one can rely on such unveilings if they are in accordance with these rulings and if not, then one does not give them any worth.

"When the burial of the Shah was finished, a window opened up on the side of his coffin where his blessed face was, in accordance with the hadith that 'the grave is a garden from the gardens of Paradise[623]..." Two huris appeared and after greeting him they said:

"Allah, Most High, created us for you. We are yours and we await your service".

Shah Naqshiband said to them:

"I have a covenant with Allah Glorified and Most High is He. I will not occupy myself with anything until I have been honoured with witnessing His Beauty, the likes of which there is none"[624].

Yaqub Charhi narrates:

"When I heard that Shah Naqshiband had passed away, I was very saddened and I began to cry. That night I saw him in my dream reciting to me the verse: '**If he were to die or be killed, would you turn on your heels?**' (Al'i Imran, 3:144). Then he said: "Zayd ibn Harith narrates…" When I awoke I understood the meaning of this verse. That is, their beautiful training and compassion continues in the spiritual realm just as it did in the Manifest Realm. On the second night I saw him again in my dream. He said: Zayd ibn Harith said: "Religion is one and forever" thus completing his words from the night before".

By giving Zayd ibn Harith, the Companion, as an example, he was showing me that I should not part from his way. Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) was the adopted son of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and he never parted from him. Our Master did not immediately accept a student but once he did they became like his sons.

On another occasion when I saw his spirit I asked him:

"How are we going to find you tomorrow on the Day of Judgement?" He replied:

"By remaining devoted to the shariah", that is by acting in accordance with the commands of the religion.

623. Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 26/2460.
624. See. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 293; Hani, *al Hadaiq,* p. 435.

As can be understood by these dreams, the blessed shaykhs are ever training and educating their disciples, while they are alive and also once they have passed away. If one turns oneself towards their spirit and attaches their hearts to them, then this is a means of a person attaining perfection and being subject to divine prosperity and enlightenment"[625].

May Allah bless their spirits and keep their favours upon us. Amen!

The tomb of Shah Naqshiband was a very humble grave, but with time it was extended to include a masjid, a madrasah, a taqqa, a guesthouse, and a fountain until it became a large complex[626].

His mother's grave is found in the village of Qasr-i Arifan, which is now known as Bahauddin. In accordance with his last requests, those people who come to visit his tomb first visit his mother's grave.

His words of wisdom

• "One needs two wings in order to fly to the sacred realm. One of them is to perform many righteous deeds and the other is to see oneself as having many faults"[627].

• "Ever embrace Allah's attribute of al-Latif and seek His grace and favour. Never await recompense for your deeds. Whatever perfection and virtue appears from your words or behaviour, forget them immediately. Always see the faults of your *nafs*"[628].

• **Ubaydullah Ahrar** narrates:

"One time a devout man saw Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) in his dream after he had passed from this world and he asked him:

"What should we do for our eternal salvation? He replied:

625. See Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid,* p. 93-94; *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 293.
626. Shirazi, *Taraiqu al Haqaia*, III, 687.
627. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa,* p. 232, no: 119.
628. *Rashahat*, p. 126.

"Occupy yourself with whatever you should be occupying yourself with at your last breath". That is, just as you need to be thinking about Allah completely at your last breath, be as aware of this throughout your life"[629].

• "To inspire others to do *dhikr* is like giving someone a flint. After that, it is up to the student to act in order to receive a good result (to light the fire)"[630].

• "The aim of *dhikr* is not merely "Allah" and "*La ilaha illallah"*. It is to go from the cause to the Causer (that is the actual Doer of that cause) and to see that bounties come from the Causer that is from Allah Almighty"[631].

• "The reality of *dhikr* is to rise to the realm of witnessing from the arena of heedlessness"[632] (That is, *dhikr* should not merely remain on one's tongue but should affect the heart and be reflected in one's behaviour).

• "*Dhikr* is the removal of heedlessness. When heedlessness is gone, even if you are silent you will be in a state of *dhikr*"[633].

• "One should occupy oneself with the pillars of the prayer and its invocations and turn oneself to it completely. This will change according to the state of the beginner And never forget that there are a great many rewards in performing the ablution of prayer"[634].

• "Allah, Most High, is above everything that one can see, hear, imagine or conceive of. The reality of "la" in the *kalima-i tawheed* is to exalt Allah, Most High, above all such things"[635].

(One of the attributes of Almighty Allah is *'al-Mukhalafatu lil-hawadith.* That is He does not resemble any of His creatures).

• "To justly abide by other's rights in every situation is from the manners of those travellers in the way of Allah. That is why those who have attained their goal and desire are those who complied with justice and *adab*"[636].

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629. *Rashahat*, p. 130.
630. Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 62.
631. Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 78.
632. Muhammad Bakir, *ibid*, p. 68.
633. Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid*, p. 104.
634. Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid*, p. 97.
635. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 200, no: 272.
636. *Anisu al Talibin* p. 72.

• "To attach one's heart to *masiwa*, that is, all worldly things that detract from Allah, is the greatest veil of heedlessness for those who travel this path"[637].

• "The reason why people find themselves distant from Allah, Most High, is that they distance themselves and they willingly burden themselves with the burdens of the world.

(That is, they become an ox for the greedy ambitions of their *nafs*). Otherwise, there is no fault on the part of Allah"[638].

• "One of the benefits of consulting with the people of the heart about a certain matter is that you will be freed of being egotistical if you find that your decision in the end was the right one. If your decision turns out to be the wrong one, then you will realise your own deficiency and fault and you will not become egotistical"[639].

• "The basis of this path is to turn towards one's heart. then to turn to Allah with that heart and remember Him often. (Faith is to acknowledge with one's tongue and to confirm with one's heart, not with one's mind. That is, one's *dhikr* should establish itself in the heart and then be reflected in one's behaviour and actions.) As a result the servant of Allah is aware and cognisant of being ever under divine observation.

Another principle of this path is to perform well the obligatory and acts of the Sunnah. One should be moderate in one's affairs and habits, and in acts such as eating, drinking, dressing and sitting. It is to protect one's heart from evil thoughts and from misgivings. One should realise that the *suhbah* of one's spiritual master is a great bounty. One should act with *adab* both in his presence and absence.

The aim of this path is to be aware of being 'ever in the presence of Allah, Most High'. During the time of the blessed Companions, this was called '*ihsan'*. As one progresses on this path, one reaches stations such as the elimination of the desires of one's *nafs*, becoming surrounded by light, reaching *fana* and *baqa*, and becoming a person of good character"[640].

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637. *Anisu al Talibin* p. 78.
638. Parsa, *Suhbah*, p. 36.
639. Parsa, *Suhbah,* p. 49.
640. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* III, 445.

• "One can never reach their goal (in the path of spirituality) as long as one does not eat from what is lawful"[641].

• "A traveller on this path of ours should not know which station he is in; so that this does not become a veil for him and he can continue in his humility and state of selflessness. The one who is pleased with his state will have drawn a veil over his own progress"[642].

• "We are only a means in the path of reaching Allah. One should break away from us and reach the True Goal".

That is once the disciple has reached the state of *fana*, and then become aware of Allah, Most High's *baqa* (eternity), one should break free of everything. This station is the station of the perfect Muslims and those who perfect others.

Even if the seeker who reaches this state lives forever, he will never succeed at being grateful for the bounty of his Master's spiritual education[643].

• Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently read the following lines about hiding one's spiritual state:

"On the inside be acquainted with Allah but on the outside (act as if you are) unaware. Such a beautiful way is rare in this world"[644].

• "A person who is in the house of a generous man will be offered many things. The state of the one who serves the servants of Allah by touching their hearts is like this"[645].

641. Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid*, p. 115.
642. *Anisu al Talibin*, p. 90.
643. *Anisu al Talibin* p. 97.
644. *Anisu al Talibin* p. 67.
645. *Rashahat*, p. 165.

17. Alauddin Attar

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1400]

His name was Muhammad ibn Muhammad Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him). It is related that his lineage goes back to the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) through his Yasawi shaykh Sayyid Ata[646].

Because he would always use beautifully-smelling fragrances or those who attended his talks sensed a spiritual fragrance coming from him, he was famous for the name Attar[647].

Khwaja Alauddin (may Allah have mercy on him) was born and raised in a family of merchants but in contrast to his elder and younger brother he did not become involved with trade but rather went to the madrasah to study the religious sciences. He did not take anything from his father's inheritance after his death and he continued to study and continue his life of abstinence. At this time he, like many other students at the madrasah, became affiliated with Shah Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him).

Shah Naqshiband advised him to sell apples at the market in order to curtail the pride and conceit that can come from knowledge. Alauddin Attar obeyed his shaykh's command immediately and began to sell apples. However, his brothers were uneasy about this. They were offended that someone from such a wealthy family should have to do something so base in their eyes

646. Lahuri, *Hazina al Asfiya,* I, 624; Nasiruddin Bukhari, *Tuhfatu al Zairin,* p. 55.
647. Nasiruddin Bukhari, *ibid,* p. 55.

and they began to censure him. When Shah Bahauddin heard this he told Alauddin to go and sell apples in front of his brothers' store. Khwaja Alauddin did as told without taking any notice of the censure[648].

This process of attaining a state of humility, modesty, and a feeling of being nothing of importance, using this and other similar methods is one of the most fundamental methods of training in tasawwuf. In this way Alauddin Attar was able to protect himself from the pride that could result from having knowledge and he was also being raised as a Sufi who did not fear the reproach of the reproachers[649].

Alauddin Attar continued his training in tasawwuf alongside Shah Naqshiband and in time he became one of his leading disciples and successors[650]. Even while he was still alive, Naqshiband would refer the training of many of his disciples to Alauddin and he would say:

"Alauddin has lightened my load greatly"[651].

At that time, Alauddin Attar went to Khwarazm and as the successor of Shah Naqshiband, began to guide the people there with his talks on tasawwuf[652].

While he was in Khwarazm certain scholars who had fallen into dispute about the matter of *ru'yatullah* (seeing Allah in the hereafter) appointed Alauddin Attar as their judge. He talked and attended to those who denied the *ru'yatullah* for three days after which all of them accepted it[653].

After Bahauddin Naqshiband's death, Muhammad Parsa, his successor along with many of his other disciples affiliated themselves with Alauddin Attar and continued to attend his talks. In addition, he also took notes of some of Attar's words and talks and penned a treatise[654] (*Rashahat*, p. 167, 168).

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648. *Rashahat*, p. 163-164.
649. See Maida, 5:54.
650. Even though it is recorded in *Rashahat* that Alauddin Attar is the son-in-law of Bahauddin Naqshiband (p. 163-164), it is actually his son Hasan who is his son-in-law. (Mawlana Shaykh, *Manaqabi Khwaja Ubaydullah Ahrar*, Bayazid State Library, Bayazid blm., nr. 3624, vr. 70b-71a; Dara Shukuh, *Safinatu al Awliya*, p. 80; Harezmi, *Silsila-i Naqshibandiyya*, vr. 126a)
651. *Rashahat*, p. 165.
652. Abu al Qasim, *al Risalatu al Bahaiyya,* vr. 74a; *Rashahat*, p. 181.
653. Charkhi, *Risale-i Abdaliyya*, p. 12; *Rashahat*, p. 166.
654. Muhammad Parsa, *Makamat-i Alaaddin Attar* (compiled by Abu al Qasim Bukhari), Uzb. FAŞE Library., nr. 11399, vr. 152b-172a; nr. 2520, vr. 53a-65b, 89b-94a. A small portion of the information in this risale can be found in Nafahat, and a greater portion can be found in

The scholar Sayyid Sharif Jurjani and his friends also became disciples of Attar and served him with complete sincerity, loyalty, and submission. In fact Sayyid Sharif Jurjani would often repeat these words:

"I was never freed from anxieties, misgivings and incorrect beliefs until I attended the talks of Zaynaddin Ali Kala. I did not truly know Allah until I began serving Alauddin Attar"[655].

Sayyid Sharif Jurjani later became one of the leading successors of Attar[656].

His efforts in the spiritual path

Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The great friends of Allah said that it is only possible to receive Allah's help and success by striving and putting in effort. That is, the one who strives and struggles will be successful. In the same way the spiritual help of one's guide to the student is in proportion to his efforts to abide by his commands.

If there is no striving or effort then there is no result. The effect of the guide upon the student only lasts for a few days. It is not continuous. The turning of the attention of the guide to his follower is only through the grace of Allah…We would spend all of our time striving and struggling in the spiritual path with Bahauddin Naqshiband..."[657].

Alauddin Attar also willed that his followers hide their spiritual state and occupy themselves with knowledge and outward deeds so that the attention of the people did not bring about a kind of self-conceit in their heart[658].

Rashahat.

655. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 541.

656. Jurjani has books on tasawwuf in Persian such as *Risale-i Shawkiyya* ve *Risale-i Wujudiyya* (Sulaymaniya Library, Jarullah, nr. 1006, vr. 1b-14a), and in the work called *Ta'rifat* he explains some tasawwuf terms. Jurjani also has a minor work in Arabic which praises Bahauddin Naqshiband and Alauddin Attar. *Terajimu Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshiband and Khwaja Alauddin Attar,* Sulaymaniya Library., Asad Efendi, nr. 3597, vr. 18b-21a.

657. *Rashahat*, p. 169-170.

658. *Rashahat*, p. 176.

Dhikr and *Muraqaba*

Alauddin Attar gave great importance to performing *dhikr* with awareness and in a particular manner. He did not approve of *dhikr* done in heedlessness. In fact, he added another practice to the order. This practice involves training the student by arising in him an awareness of being with Allah (*maiyyah-i Zatiyya*) which brings about a kind of rapturous trance. This practice of being on the *sayr-u suluq* is the shortest path to attaining one's goal[659].

Imam Rabbani has said**:**

"Khwaja Alauddin made great strides in spirituality...at the same time he identified a very beautiful path and practice that allows one to progress to these great ranks. His successors said that "the shortest of paths is the path of Khwaja Alauddin". In truth, this path is the shortest and most direct in reaching the final goal. Only a few of even the greatest saints attained this bounty so how can they put forth a way of reaching such a high station...?'

Khwaja Attar is one of the most blessed people in this chain. Every person who has found themselves on this tariq –by the grace of Allah- whether they be from the Attariya branch or the Ahrariya branch, have found the right path through the light of that person's guidance[660]".

Suhbah

In his assemblies Alauddin Attar would caution repeatedly:

"Converse with each other! This *suhbah* is from the Sunnah *muakkadah* (the strongly advised sunnah practices)".

Allah, Most High, has said about this matter:

'And as for the blessing of your Lord, speak out!' (Duha, 93:11)

In this verse, Allah, the True Bestower of all bounties commands His prophet as follows:

"Speak out about the bounty of guidance and Our grace that We have considered you worthy of and proclaim the grace of your Lord".

659. See Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, no: 290.
660. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ghaybiyya, p*. 20-21.

This matter has been explained as following in another narration:

“Allah addressed the prophet Dawud as follows:

“Take Us as your friend and take Our friends as your friends and help Our servants to befriend Us”. In an expression of his own incapacity Dawud said:

“O Allah! I have befriended You o Elevated Being and I have the strength to befriend those who befriend You. However, I do not have the power to establish love for you in the hearts of your servants”.

Allah, Most High, responded:

“O Dawud! If, with enthusiasm and love, you remind and talk to Our servants of Our bounties, then you will be able to establish love for Us in their hearts”[661.]

This is why in Sufi gatherings we are reminded of Almighty Allah’s physical and spiritual bounties upon us; His reward and punishment that He has promised His servants are remembered and His beautiful names and His attributes are also remembered. In this way love for the Divine is engraved upon the hearts.

During his talks Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on him) would say:

“To be always with the people of Allah is a means for increasing the *aql-i maad* (the mind that places importance on the hereafter and prepares for it)”[662].

“The *suhbah* is from strongly advised Sunnah practices (*sunnah muakkadah*). One must converse with the Friends of Allah every day or every two days and confirm to their *adab*. If one is too distant from them, then the seeker should write a letter to his shaykh every month, or every two months, informing him of his inner and outer states, both explicitly and implicitly. In addition he should be pre-occupied with his shaykh wherever he may be (that is, he should continue his attachment to him through the bond of his heart) so that the bond between him and his guide should not be severed completely”[663].

661. Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 82-83.
662. *Rashahat*, p. 184.
663. *Rashahat*, p. 184.

Close to his death Alauddin Attar told Yaqub Charhi, one of his successors, to guide the people after him[664].

His death and his last requests

Muhammad Parsa narrates:

"During his final illness Alauddin Attar said to his students:

"The Friends and saints have departed from this world. The journeys that are made to the eternal home continue without pause. Certainly, the hereafter is better than this world!"

While he was speaking his blessed gaze fell upon some green bushes. One of those there said:

"How beautiful is this greenness". Khwaja said:

"The earth is also beautiful. There is nothing left within me that inclines towards this world. I am only saddened that when my friends come and cannot find me, they will be filled with longing and go back broken hearted".

Another time during his last illness he said to his students:

"Protect yourselves against the misconceptions that have entered this religion. Do the opposite to the unseemly acts that the common people have made a habit of. The sending of the prophet was to eliminate the unseemly habits of man. Always be in contact with each other and in unity. Seek refuge in each other's protection. Eliminate your egos and consider your brother above yourself. Live in a state of altruism. Perform every task with the highest *taqwa* and never abandon *taqwa* to the best of your ability. *Suhbah* is from the *Sunnah muakkadah* (the strongly advised Sunnah practices of the prophet). Continue this blessed practice and never abandon the *suhbah*, whether individually or as a group. If you adhere to what I have said here without departing from uprightness, then you will have gained in one breath what I have gained in my entire life. That is, you will have gained it more easily and your state will be ever a state of continual growth. If you ignore my words then you will certainly be losers".

664. Muinaddin Naqshibandi, *Kanzu Saade,* p. 727.

At that point Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on him) paused and began to proclaim the *kalima-i tawheed* loudly...

During his final illness from his eloquent and lucid tongue would sometimes drop pearls of contentment, ecstasy and love; sometimes passion, enthusiasm and ardour; and sometimes advice and wisdom, and sometimes prayers for good for the people. When his illness grew intense, his seeking of refuge increased and he began to repeatedly recite the following verse: **'On the Day Almighty Allah will ask Hell, 'Are you full?' it will ask, 'Are there no more to come?**' (Qaf, 50:30)[665].

Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on him)fell ill in the month of Rajab in the hijri year 802 and he passed away on the 20th of that same month on a Wednesday evening (17th March, 1400 CE).

His blessed tomb is located 12km to the south of the town of Danow, close to the borders of Tajikstan and Uzbekistan. It is now visited frequently and is known as Shaykh Attar-i Wali[666].

According to Muhammad Parsa, one of the dervishes saw Alauddin Attar approximately forty days after he had migrated to the hereafter in a dream. He said to him:

"The grace and favour of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is far above the estimate of those who love us. Before I passed away I gave you necessary advice on every matter".

There was a needle on the ground in front of him. He picked it up and put it under his foot saying:

"In order to be worthy of understanding these meanings, one needs to be able to stand upon a needle without falling"[667].

That is whoever lives a life of *taqwa* and does not part from it in the slightest will be subject to many great spiritual bounties.

665. *Rashahat*, p. 187-189.
666. See. Parsa, *Makamat-i Alauddin Attar* (compiled by Abu al Qasim Bukhari), vr. 168b; Jami, *Nafahat*, v. 543; *Rashahat*, p. 190.
667. *Rashahat*, p. 190.

His words of wisdom

• "One should be meticulous in matters of knowledge and *taqwa* and conceal the spiritual state that they arrive at in complete humility. One should advise the disciples in accordance with their spiritual ranks. One should be aware of the thoughts that arise in the heart, trying to control them and beware of hurting/offending the people of the heart[668].

• "I guarantee that the one who sincerely devotes himself to this path and pays attention to its practices will pass from imitation to reality. Khwaja Bahauddin ordered me to imitate him. I imitated him in every matter and I am now also in a state of imitation. Indeed I observed the influence of him and his state within me"[669].

• "The most virtuous of inner and outer states is to struggle for *tafwiz*[670]. That is, to live in a state of contentment and leave one's affairs to Allah. All of the prophets and the saints lived like this until their last breath. What is needed for the servant is to submit their affairs to Allah wholeheartedly at every instant. If something of his own choice or preference arises in him he immediately eliminates it by embracing *tafwiz*. The servant should know and

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668. *Rashahat*, p. 176.
669. *Rashahat*, p. 185.
670. **Tafwiz**: This has the meaning of the servant submitting his will to the will of Allah completely and being content with the result. In this way he is freed from sorrow, sadness and worry. The following event explains this state well:

A rumour is spread that the famous mutasawwuf of the 19th century, Shaykh Muhammad Nuru al Arabi denied the will of man, that is the *juz'i irada*. Hearing this, the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmajid Han called this saint to him and asked him about it. When asked about this matter he gave the following answer:

"I did not reject the idea of *juz-i irada* in the general sense of the word. However I said that for some people it is as if it does not exist. This is because the great *awliyullah* live their lives in awareness that they are always in the presence of Allah, the opportunity for their *juz-i irada* to manifest itself is small enough to be non-existent. This is why they act, under all circumstances, not according to their own will, but in accordance with the will of Almighty Allah, whose dominion they are in. Otherwise they would be acting contrary to adab and err. For instance we are now in the presence of the sultan. He tells us to 'come' and we come and he tells us to 'go' and we go. It is not possible for us to use our will in spite of the will of the sultan who contains us. Whereas have a look at the heedless people and other creatures outside; they are quite free in their will".

The sultan was very pleased with this reply of Shaykh Muhammad Nur al Arabi and he gave him precious gifts. And so the special servants of Allah Most High live in the awareness that Allah Most High is present and watching at every instant and in every place and they submit their matters to Him and submit to His Divine Will, despite their own desires.

understand this well that what Allah, Most High, has chosen for him is certainly better and more beneficial than his own choice"[671].

• "One should hold to Allah inwardly and to the rope of Allah outwardly. Reaching perfection occurs by combining these two traits".

That is, the seekers inner *qibla* should be the Being of Almighty Allah and the eye of his heart should never stray from His Beauty. He should have no other desire in both worlds other than Allah. Whatever he has he should sacrifice it for Allah[672].

• "What is required for the faithful seeker is to be on the path of the sharia with his body, to be upon the tariq and haqiqa with mind and spirit, and the mysterious faculty of his *sirr* must want to be with Allah always"[673].

• "The aim of visiting the graves of the *awliya* (the friends of Allah) is to turn towards Allah.

One should use the spirit (uality) of that *wali* as a means of turning to Allah in the best way. In the same way, when a person shows humility and respect towards the people, in reality his aim is Allah, however much it appears that he is paying attention to the people. When the humility and respect shown to people is for the sake of Allah, Most High, then it is good and acceptable. One should consider the people as a place of manifestation of Allah's power and wisdom. If this is not the intention in being humble and respectful before the people then this will amount to nothing more than deceit"[674].

• **Saadeddin Kashghari** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Becoming focused on the outer sciences and arguing about these matters darkens the heart. Alauddin Attar has said about this matter:

"The student should seek forgiveness twenty times after debates and arguments on matters of knowledge"[675].

671. *Rashahat*, p. 177-178.
672. *Rashahat*, p. 179.
673. *Rashahat*, p. 180.
674. *Rashahat*, p. 181.
675. *Rashahat*, p. 326-327.

• "Conversing with Allah occurs after one annihilates oneself in the Friend (Allah)"[676].

• "Almost all of the Holy Qur'an indicates to humbleness and considering oneself to be nothing"[677].

• "If Allah did not have the attribute of *Jamal* (Beauty) then His *Jalal* (glory, majesty) would burn the world and if He did not have the attribute of *Jalal* then He would burn the world with the light of His *Jamal*"[678].

676. Yaqub Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 105.
677. Yaqub Charkhi, *ibid*, p. 117.
678. Charkhi, *Sharh-i Asma al Husna, p*. 26; Charkhi, *Jamaliyya-Havraiyya*, p. 34.

18. Yaqub Charkhi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1447]

Mawlana Yaqub ibn Uthman Charkhi (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the town of Charkh, which is in the province of Luger between the towns of Kabul and Ghazna, or in the village of Serrez in Charkh. It is estimated that he was born in the middle of the 8th century after the hijrah. His father was an ascetic and a very pious man. When his neighbours offered him some water in a glass that belonged to an orphan he was so pious that he did not accept it. Charkhi speaks of this event as follows:

"Anyone who uses the possessions of the orphans will find no benefit in them"[679].

His father's and his grandfather's graves are still oft-visited sites just as his own is. Muhammad Zahid, Dervish Muhammad and Khwajagi Imkanagi, the blessed faces of the Naqshiband chain are from his blessed lineage.

When he was young Yaqub Charkhi wished to go to the big cities to study, however this did not take place. At that time he saw Khidr (peace be upon him) in his dream. Khidr said to him:

"Make plans to travel in order to study and remember me whenever you need something where you go". Charkhi said:

"I did as Khidr said and I realised that my dream was from Allah (*rahmani*)"[680].

679. Yaqub Charkhi, *Tafsirr*, Suleymaniye Library., Nafiz Pasha, no: 59, vr. 172b-173a.
680. Charkhi, *Risale-i Abdaliyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 136.

Yaqub Charkhi (may Allah have mercy on him) studied in the madrasas of Egypt, Herat, and Bukhara. Wherever he went he was extremely sensitive about eating lawful food and avoiding food of doubtful origins. For instance, when he saw that many of the members of the *waqf* foundations in Herat were not very careful about *taqwa*, and *halal* and *haram*, and that this was a cause for doubt and suspicion, he did not eat their food. He only ate at the Abdullah Ansari Tekke *waqf*, which was trustworthy[681].

After studying many of the religious sciences, Charkhi went from Herat to Bukhara in the hijri year 782 (1380AD). Here he could not decide which of the sciences to specialise in. During those days he saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in his dream reciting from the Qur'an, slowly letter by letter. He interpreted this dream as being an indication to study the science of tafsir and he began to occupy himself with this[682].

He also studied other sciences alongside this. His teachers gave him permission (*ijaza*) to give *fatwa* or rulings about religious matters. After finishing his studies, at the time that he was about to return to his hometown, he met Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on them both) in Bukhara and made the following request:

"Please keep a place for me in your heart".

Shah Naqshiband replied:

"Do you come to visit us now that you are about to leave?"

Charkhi said:

"I love you, Sir!"

Shah Naqshiband asked:

"Why?"

Charkhi replied:

"You are a great and righteous man whom everyone loves and admires".

Shah Naqshiband said:

681. Mir Abduawwal, *Mesmu'at,* p. 133; *Rashahat*, p. 145-146.
682. Charkhi, *Tafsir-i Yaqub Charkhi*, p. 98.

“You should have a stronger reason than that. What if the love and confidence that people have in me is not from Allah?”

Charkhi said:

“According to a trustworthy hadith, when Allah, Most High, loves one of his servants he places love for him in the hearts of the people (that is, the people love him too)[683]. Hearing this reply Shah Naqshiband smiled and said:

“We are *Azizan*”.

Azizan was the title of Ali Ramitani and with these words Shah Naqshiband was saying that they were the representative of Ali Ramitani in these times (may Allah be pleased with them all).

These words deeply startled Yaqub Charkhi because just a month before, he was addressed in his dream as follows: “Be a follower of Azizan”. He had forgotten this until now.

Charkhi said again:

“Do not forget me in your heart”.

Shah Naqshiband said:

“Whenever somebody made this request from Azizan (Ali Ramitani) he would say: “There is no room left in our hearts for other than Allah Most High, so leave us a reminder so that when we see it we will remember you”. But it seems you have nothing to leave behind”. Then he took off his cap and handed it to Yaqub Charkhi saying:

“Keep this and whenever you see it remember us”.

Then he gave him the following advice:

“Be sure to go and see Mawlana Tajaddin on this journey of yours for he is from the *awliyaullah*”.

Startled, Yaqub Charkhi said to himself: “I am returning to my hometown via Balkh and he is in the opposite direction”. Eventually he set out for Balkh. However something happened on the way that necessitated that he go to Dasht-i Kulek and remembering Shah Naqshiband’s words he was amazed.

683. Bukhari, Adab, 41; Muslim, Birr, 48.

There he attended the talks of Mawlana Tajaddin and his love for Shah Naqshiband increased even more. He returned to Bukhara with the desire to be his disciple.

On the way he saw a *meczub* whom he trusted and he asked him only the following:

"Should I go?"

The *meczub* replied:

"Go quickly". He then drew many lines in the ground. Charkhi said to himself: "Let me count these lines and if they come out an odd number then this will show that my desire is true. For *Allah is* witr *and He loves the* witr"[684]. The number of lines turned out to be an odd number.

He stayed in his house in the district of Fathabad in Bukhara. As a result of the *istikhara* prayers he made and the dreams he saw he became convinced that Shah Naqshiband was a great friend of Allah.

He said to himself:

"With the help of Allah Most High a desire arose in me. Divine help became my guide and directed me to the spiritual gatherings of Khwaja Naqshiband. I went to him and was honoured with becoming aligned with him. I was subject to his compliments and gracious bounties.

With the help of Allah, Most High, I realised that Khwaja was one of the great *awliyaullah* and a perfect master with the capacity to perfect others. After many signs and dreams I opened up the Holy Qur'an at a random page to see what it would say to me. I was faced with the following verse:

'They are the ones Allah has guided, so be guided by their guidance' (An'am, 6:90) [685].

Yaqub Charkhi went to the village of Qasr-i Arifan to become a disciple of Shah Naqshiband and was welcomed by him. After prayer they talked and at the end of the talk Shah Naqshiband said:

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684. Bukhari, Dawat, 68.
685. *Rashahat*, p. 141.

"We cannot accept any disciple of our own account. Let us see what appears tonight and if you be accepted then we too shall accept you".

Yaqub Charkhi expressed his fears and anxieties of that evening as follows:

"I have never passed a more difficult night than that one. I was thinking to myself: Will this great door open for me? Will I meet with acceptance or rejection?"

Spending a very difficult night Charkhi then performed the dawn prayer with Shah Naqshiband. After the prayer Naqshiband said:

"May you be blessed we have received an indication of acceptance".

Yaqub Charkhi spent some time with his shaykh and then requesting permission he left Bukhara. Naqshiband said to him:

"Take what you have received from us to the servants of Allah. To those who are near you, address them with your speech and for those who are far, guide them with your writings, either by letter or by book". He also advised him to continue attending the assemblies of Alauddin Attar[686].

His years of *sayr-u suluq*

The following is narrated by Yaqub Charkhi:

"After I occupied myself for a period of time with the *wuquf-i adadi dhikr* as ordered by Shah Naqshiband, I dreamed that I was in a large clean pool of water. When I told the Shah of my dream he said:

"This dream is a sign that your worship and obedience has been accepted by Allah. The heart has been revived through the means of *dhikr*. That is, just as water brings the body to life, so too the water of *dhikr* has allowed the heart to come alive"[687].

Another time Yaqub Charkhi talked about the *sayr-u suluq* as follows:

686. See Charkhi, *Risalei Unsiyya*, p. [in *Ney-Name*], p. 92-95; Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 180-183; Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 549; *Rashahat*, p. 139-146.
687. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 184.

"The aim of tasawwuf is for the heart to find peace with Allah Most High and togetherness with one's Lord. This can be achieved through the path of *sayr-u suluq*. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"May Allah have mercy on the one who learns and teaches others what they must do in the world and how to prepare for the hereafter". Thus the disciple who travels this spiritual path in this world will be pleasant in both this world and the next"[688].

"Those who desire the hereafter in this realm and perform righteous deeds will be honoured with witnessing the Beauty of Allah. The Holy Qur'an states:

"But as for anyone who desires the hereafter, and strives for it with the striving it deserves, being a believer, the striving of such people will be gratefully acknowledged" (Isra, 17:19)

Those who fall prey to their *nafs* and become lost in heedlessness however will be deprived of this witnessing and meeting with their Lord. The Holy Qur'an has the following to say about them:

'As for those who do not expect to meet Us and are content with the life of this world and at rest in it, and those who are heedless of Our Signs, their shelter will be the Fire because of what they earned' (Yunus, 10:7-8).

Another verse states:

'We created many of the jinn and mankind for Hell. They have hearts they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware' (A'raf, 7:179)689.

"The *sayr-u suluq* requires patience, discipline and striving. The traveller on this path must first of all strive to bring life to his nights as the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) did. The most important benefit of the *tahajjud* prayer is that it is a moment in time when a person can listen to oneself, when one can direct one's attention to one's *nafs* and take himself to account. He should busy himself with recitation of Qur'an and

688. Charkhi, *Ney-Name*, p. 14.
689. Charkhi, *Ney-Name*, p. 17.

performing *tasbihat* and relying upon Allah and should distance everything other than Him from his heart and contemplate deeply upon the reasons for the creation of the universe"[690].

Waking up for *tahajjud* prepares the disciple for the *awrad* he has to recite. In addition the traveller should also contemplate on death in the darkness of the night. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Make much remembrance of the destroyer of all pleasures" (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 4/2307).

Also the traveller should contemplate on the creation of the universe, and the manifestations of divine power so as to perceive his own powerlessness in an effort to increase his knowledge and love of Allah. After this preparation of the heart, it is now time to repent. Then comes the abandoning of vile traits and the adoption of beautiful traits that is, purification of one's nafs. Then one can continue in one's vocal *dhikr* and the *dhikr* of the subtle faculties, having acquired a great feeling of cleansing. By repeating this deed everyday everything other than Allah will be removed from one's heart in time, and the person will turn to Allah, eventually reaching the station of witnessing Him.[691]

After leaving Bukhara, Yaqub Charkhi resided for a time in Kash. During this time he received news of the death of Shah Naqshiband. Due to his great sorrow, Charkhi passed some difficult days, and then went to Alauddin Attar (may Allah have mercy on them) under instruction from his shaykh. He continued attending his assemblies for approximately eleven years[692].

His method of guiding others

After the death of Alauddin Attar, Yaqub Charkhi went to settle in the village of Hisar and then Hulgatu and continued to guide the people there. He carried out this sacred duty for approximately fifty years. He said:

"When I was deprived of the advice of my Master, I tried to carry out his command to transmit whatever came to me from him to others" and so to

690. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 78a.
691. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 143b; Samarkandi, *Silsila al Arifin***,** vr. 40b.
692. *Rashahat*, p. 145.

the best of my ability I talked with those who were near me and sent letters to those who were distant, fully knowing that I am not worthy of this. However one must believe that the commands of the Friends of Allah are not without wisdom”[693].

Yaqub Charkhi placed great importance on uprightness. He divided it into two, that of the outer (*zahir*) and that of the inner (*batin*). The outer aspects of *istiqama* are to perform one’s worship at certain times, the prayer, the fasting, going for hajj, paying zakat, and paying attention to virtuous behaviour towards others, and abiding by the commands and prohibitions of the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

The inner aspect is the development of an awareness in the heart that one is constantly in the presence of Allah and this is true faith. In this situation then *istiqama* envelops every moment of one’s life. This is one of the most important duties of the believer[694].

The Holy Qur’an states:

‘…Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace’ (Ra‘d, 13:18).

The awareness of being ever in the presence of Allah, that is being able to live the feeling of *ihsan*, is the greatest condition for attaining sainthood. Almighty Allah is closer to the human being than all else. While he is with us day and night, we occupy ourselves with other things. Whereas the Holy Qur’an states:

‘**Standing over you are guardians, noble, recording, who know what you do’** (Infitar, 82:10-12).

In this verse lies the following indirect caution: “*We are always with you so why are you busy with other than Us?”*[695].

693. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 94.
694. Ahmad Jahid Haksever, *Yaqub Charkhi,* İstanbul 2009, p. 162.
695. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 127a-b.

His virtues

Yaqub Charkhi was a scholar who had acquired knowledge of the outer sciences and a perfected guide who had advanced in the inner science of tasawwuf. His ten works[696] which have reached us today are a patent proof of his competence in this field.

Yaqub Charkhi would recite a certain amount from the Qur'an everyday so that he would complete a recitation once a week[697]. He placed great importance on conversing with the righteous and said that this was how the heart would be freed from everything other than Allah. He also gave great importance to silent *dhikr* (*khafi dhikr*). He believed that the Sufi should behave with humility, like an ordinary person in order to conceal his spiritual state. However, the also advised that one preserve one's dignity and honour.

Yaqub Charkhi would give more importance to reality and uprightness rather than dreams. He did not approve of some people who placed extreme importance on the path of dream interpretation[698].

His love for Allah

Yaqub Charkhi speaks of one of his sons who had a beautiful character and nature. He completed his *sayr-u suluq* in a mere four months but passed away when he was only seventeen years old.

Even in the last period of his life, Yaqub Charkhi would express the sorrow he felt at the death of his son. However, the love he felt for his son in no way overshadowed the love he felt for Allah. His real love was for Almighty Allah. Every time he turned to face his son's grave he would say some lines to the effect of the following:

"One cannot travel the path of Tawheed with gossip and vain talk. What is needed for you is the pleasure of the Friend".

696. The works of Yaqub Charkhi: *Tafsir-i Yaqub Charkhi, Risale-i Unsiyya, Risale-i Abdaliyya, Risale-i Naiyya, Sharh-i Asma al Husna, Risale der Ilm-i Faraiz, Misbah Muktebis min al-Mesabih, Hadith Arbain, Havraiyya, Sharh-i Nisabu al Sibyan li al-Farahi.*
697. Muhammad Nazir Rancha, "Du Eser-i Gayr-i Chapi-yi Mawlana Yaqub Charkhi", p. 40-41.
698. Mawlana Shaykh, *Manaqib-i Khwaja Ubaydullah Ahrâr*, vr. 69b; Jami, *Nafahat*, s. 550; *Rashahat*, p. 146.

He would then say:

“There is no room for two beloveds in one heart. All of one’s loves should be melted down in the love of Allah”[699].

His Contemplation

The purpose of the creation of the universe, which is similar to the human being in many ways, is that Allah Most High willed to display His Divine artistry and enable the entire universe to witness His Beauty and Perfection[700].

In that case, we need to frequently contemplate and take heed from the universe which is the place of manifestation of Almighty Allah’s attributes. If man were to compare himself to the world in which he lives and to the Sun and the stars, he would realise just how small and forlorn he is. Almighty Allah then draws the attention of man to Himself, to the universe and to other creatures and says: **“Let the human being consider then from what he has been created’ (Tariq, 86:5).** In that case, man’s distinguishing feature and true worth lies not in his material aspect but in his spiritual nature[701].

The Most Beautiful Names

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Allah Most High has ninety nine names. The one who memorises them will go to Paradise” (Bukhari, Dawat, 68).

The meaning of the word ‘memorise’ (*hifz*) is not merely to recite the names themselves but rather to deeply contemplate on their inner meaning and live in accordance with them. That is, to become exposed to and influenced by the manifestation of the beautiful attributes of Allah.

If a believer enumerates one of the names of Allah repeatedly, contemplates upon it deeply and acts in accordance with its meaning, then he will be subject to its manifestation.

699. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 53b.
700. See Charkhi, *Ney-Name*, p. 33.
701. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 9b-10a, 12b, 14b, 46b, 50b, 61b.

Every human being should strive to learn the names of Almighty Allah in accordance with his capacity. As the human being reflects on the attributes of Allah's Names in his own state and behaviour, his perfection increases and as his perfection increases he becomes like a clear mirror reflecting these Names.

The reflections of some of Allah's Names and attributions in the human being are as follows:

The names of **al-Rahman** and **al-Rahim** point to the heart and the body. If the heart occupies itself with *dhikr* and the body with worship (*'ibadah*) then that person will be shown mercy.

The effect of the name **al-Malik** on the *arif* (knower) is that he does not become deceived by the fleeting kingdoms of apparent rulers in this world and knows them to be powerless. Thus, he does not concern himself with them but worships only Allah.

The effect of the name **al-Quddus** on the servant is that he cleanses his heart of human ties and remains distant from the caprices and desires of his nafs and from the whisperings of Satan. Thus he is able to follow the commands of the religion in every circumstance and with great passion.

The person who is subject to the manifestation of the name **al-Mu'min** is distanced from everything other than Allah and spreads mercy from his spirit to all of creation. He imbues trust in everyone and protects the poor and lonely.

The one who is subject to the name **al-Mutakabbir** reaches the state of annihilation. We came to this world without having paid any price or with any capital and everything we possess, even our faith, is by the grace of Almighty Allah.

In return for this grace and these bounties the servant is not deceived by the fleeting bounties of this world and even of the hereafter and turns to Allah only. They are in a constant state of praise, gratitude and remembrance of Allah.

Those who are subject to the names of **al-Khaliq**, **al-Bari** and **al-Musawwir** transfer their gaze from the creatures to the Creator. They ponder on the divine artistry in all creatures.

Those who are subject to the names **al-Sattar** and **al-Ghaffar** conceal other people's faults, forgive them their defects and offer them advice.

Those who are subject to the name **al-Qahhar** struggle against their evil-commanding self. A life of piety is a never-ending battle in which no truce is ever made with the self.

The effect of the name **al-Razzaq** is that the servant never displays their needs to anyone other than Allah. They do not become enveloped by daily sorrows and they are freed from worrying about their provision.

The effect of the name of **al-Fattah** is to help the innocent and try to eradicate the oppression of the oppressors.

The effect of the name **al-Alim** is that the servant gains knowledge of the inner and outer sciences. On account of this knowledge the servant becomes a person of piety and will be able to protect themselves from sin.

The effect of the name **al-Basit** is patience in times of constriction and gratitude in times of ease and comfort.

The effect of the name of **al-Basir** is that the servant strives to reach the state of 'ihsan' by constantly watching over their own state, words and acts.

The effect of the name of **al-Hakam** is that the servant wholeheartedly accepts the commands of Allah and is thus distanced from the people of falsehood.

The effect of the name **al-Hafiz** is that the servant is kept distant from the caprices of his soul, from passions and from anger.

The effect of the name **al-Hakim** is that the servant understands the aim in the purpose of creation and pleads and supplicates as follows: **'...Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire'** (Al'i Imran, 3:191).

The effect of the name **al-Wadud** on the traveller is that he befriends Allah and the friends of Allah. His love is directed to Almighty Allah and to those He loves.

The effect of the name **al-Ba'ith** is that the servant prepares for the hereafter and strives to revive dead hearts by guiding them. A heart that is heedless

of Allah is in reality dead, even though it appears to be alive. To revive the hearts is possible by living the truth and spreading it.

The effects of the names **al-Wajid**, **al-Majid**, **al-Samad** and **al-Muahhir** are that the servant knows himself to be needy, powerless and weak. All dignity and favours are from Allah and all obedience, worship and prayers are due to Him.

The effect of the name **al-Muntaqim** is to continue the struggle in the greater and lesser jihad.

The effect of the name **al-Badi'** is to ponder on the flows of divine power throughout the universe and to contemplate on His eternal and extraordinary artistry.

The effect of the name **al-Warith** is that the servant does not attribute anything to rulers or kings but is aware that everything is under the power of Allah.

The effect of the name **al-Sabur** is that the servant shows perseverance in his affairs; he is wary of sinning, continues in his worship and is patient in the face of calamities[702].

Cleanliness

Yaqub Charkhi (may Allah have mercy on him) gave great importance to both physical and spiritual cleanliness. He would say:

"Know that cleanliness gains for the servant the friendship of Allah. Almighty Allah befriends those who cleanse themselves of filth... outer cleanliness aids in inner cleanliness"[703].

In regards to spiritual cleanliness he said:

"When the heart is purified of vile traits and is adorned with beautiful ones, it will reach salvation. A person can never be free from the calamities of both worlds as long as their heart has not reached salvation. Allah Most High said:

702. See Charkhi, *Sharh-i Asma ul Husna, p*. 16-33.
703. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 96.

"...the Day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any use –except to those who come to Allah with sound and flawless hearts' (Shura, 26:88-89).

Thus, to attain divine mercy is only possible through maintaining a sound heart"[704].

A sound heart is one that is purified of all *masiwa* (that is, everything than Allah) and is always together with Allah. It is one that does not harm any of Allah's creatures nor is it harmed or offended by them. It is a heart that forgives for the sake of Allah and forgets the wrongs done to it.

Yaqub Charkhi also said:

"Death that takes place without having reached Allah is an ordinary death. What will allow one to reach one's aim is to 'die before you die', that is to abandon the desires of your nafs. In other words, it is to reach the state of annihilation (*fana*). In this situation then the heart is cleansed of all vile traits and is adorned with praiseworthy character, thus giving way to inner and outer cleanliness. This is why the traveller is ever in need of following in every matter a perfected and perfecting Sufi master"[705].

According to Yaqub Charkhi the verse: '**He who has purified himself will have success'** (Al-Ala, 87:14) is an indication that in the *sayr-u suluq* one must first of all purify one's *nafs* through *tawbah* (repentance) and then remember Allah through one's tongue and other faculties[706].

His Death

There is some dispute about the date of Yaqub Charkhi's (may Allah have mercy on him) death but generally it is accepted that he passed away in the hijri year 851, or 1447 AD. His tomb is in the village of Hulgatu in Hisar. This place is an important visiting site approximately 5km from Dushanbe, the capital of today's Tajikistan[707].

704. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 100.
705. Charkhi, *Ney-Name,* p. 34.
706. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 143b-144a.
707. Nafisi, *Tarih-i Nazm u Nesr*, II, 778-779.

Words of wisdom

• "The traveller must be aware of his every breath - was it taken in awareness of the presence of Allah or in heedlessness?"[708]

• "Whenever the traveller notices in himself a state of constriction, apathy, doubt or anxiety he should immediately examine his state and his acts. He should take his *nafs* to account by noting whether he did anything contrary to the noble shari'a, or against the pleasure of Allah. If something, however minor it may be, did take place he should immediately try to correct it with great care by seeking Allah's forgiveness"[709].

• "It is not possible to explain 'divine love' using the eloquent and lucid Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu or any language at all for that matter...This is why the friends of Allah speak about some of the mysteries of reality in a special language amongst themselves so that those who are incompetent do not understand... For instance, when it sees the rose, the nightingale sings a thousand verses for it with its sweet melody but when winter arrives its melody is cut off by the garden of thorns...Thus the melodies of reality of the nightingale only appear when the rose is present...When there is no rose the nightingale cannot sing"[710]. (That is the Friends of Allah become as silent as a book full of wisdom in the presence of the ignorant).

• "One of the great Sufis said:

"O Allah! How great is the blessing you have bestowed on Your friends. Those who find them come to know You and those who know them find You. Those who devote themselves to them never become rebellious and rejected"[711].

• "Allah, Most High, increases the desire of those who desire Him"[712].

• "Many scholars remain distant from the circles of the Friends of Allah. This is why their worship is lacking"[713].

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708. *Rashahat, p.* 74.
709. *Anisu al Talibin,* p. 185.
710. See Charkhi, *Ney-Name,* p.. 29-30.
711. Charkhi, *Ney-Name,* p. 31.
712. Charkhi, *Ney-Name,* p. 41.
713. Charkhi, *Ney-Name,* p. 69.

(That is, in order for the scholars to become people of piety it is a must that they attend spiritual talks).

• “The proof of arriving at the rank of sainthood is to follow completely the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), both outwardly and inwardly. Those who turned away from the happiness of following him were subject to eternal misery[714]. The one who wishes to reach the rank of sainthood has no other choice than to willingly follow the Messenger of Allah”[715].

• “The prophets and the friends of Allah would bring life to their nights by staying awake. You too remain awake and bring love to this path so that this state of yours can be a means for bringing Allah’s mercy upon you”[716].

• “There are two paths. Some practice abstinence and struggle. They desire the result of this and they fulfil their aim. Whereas some are people of *ihsan* and do not see anything other than the grace and favour of Allah. They know that their obedience and struggle are by His grace and favour. They do not count their deeds and continue in their obedience only for God’s sake. Those who hold on to this idea and who also persevere in their deeds have reached their aim more quickly”[717].

• “Worship is when the heart is occupied with *marifah*, knowledge of Allah, and the spirit is busy with *mushahada* (realisation that it is continually under the watch of the divine camera), the *nafs* is busy with serving others (looking upon other creatures through the ‘eyes’ of Allah and thereby attending to their needs), and the tongue is busy with *dhikr*, (that is when remembrance of Allah reaches the heart and is transformed into deeds)”[718].

(In short, worship is when the human being is together with Allah, Most High, at every instant, both outwardly and inwardly).

714. See Al’i Imran 3:31-32.
715. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 91.
716. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 110.
717. Charkhi, *Risale-i Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 117.
718. Charkhi, *Tafsir,* vr. 5a.

19. Ubaydullah Ahrar

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1404 - 1490]

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) is famous for the title *Khwaja Ahrar* ('the shaykh of the free'). It is narrated that this title was given to him on account of his heart being free from worry about property and wealth and anxiety about both worlds[719].

He was born in the month of Ramadan in the hijri year 806 in the village of Baghistan in Tashkent. His lineage goes back to the caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him)[720].

The son of his uncle, Khwaja Ishaq, narrates:

"When we were children, we wanted to include Khwaja Ubaydullah in some of our games but we could never succeed however much we tried. We thought that he would accept our invitation and play with us. When we became engrossed in our game, he would part from us and be with himself. He would always preserve himself from vain affairs"[721].

One day Ubaydullah Ahrar saw the prophet Isa (peace be upon him) in his dream. Some of his relatives wanted to interpret this dream as meaning that he would become a physician. However, he interpreted this dream himself, saying that he would revive dead hearts, that is, he would be given the duty of guiding the people and giving life to their hearts[722].

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719. See Kose Ahmad, *Tuhfat al Ahbab*, vr. 94a; Walikhwaja, *Khwaja Ahrar-i Wali*, p. 74-75; Necdet Tosun, *Bahauddin Naqshiband: His life, his views and his tariq,* Istanbul 2002, p. 159.
720. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 564.
721. *Rashahat*, p. 413.
722. *Rashahat*, p. 413.

When he was 22 years old he occupied himself with his studies and also travelled around the various cities of Maveraunnehir, benefitting from the leading men of the Naqshibandiyya. He visited the tomb of Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him). He met with many of his successors and benefitted from them. In particular, he spent 40 days conversing with Alauddin Ghujdwani (may Allah have mercy on him) and received his *ijaza* (permission) to guide others from him[723].

Ubaydullah Ahrar narrates:

"In the beginning, such a great storm of imploring Allah broke out within me, that I requested with great humility, whomever I encountered, free or slave, old or young, masters or laymen, to pray for me and help me"[724].

A short time later Ubaydullah Ahrar went to see Yaqub Charkhi (may Allah have mercy on them both). After he spent some days in his company he aligned himself with him. Charkhi spoke about him to those around him as follows:

"This is how a disciple should enter the presence of his guide! He should be spiritually prepared with his entire being. Now all that awaits is to write his *ijaza*. He has prepared the lantern, the oil and the wick, now all we need is to light the match".

Ubaydullah Ahrar stayed in the company of Yaqub Charkhi for three months and then receiving permission to be his successor, he returned to Herat and began to guide the people there[725].

The path of service

Ubaydullah Ahrar preferred to live humbly and independently, both in times of plenty and times of want. He withdrew his hand from the bounties of the world and focused himself entirely on *marifatullah*.

He mentions a time from the days when he was in need as follows:

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723. Mir Abdulawwal, *Mesmu'at*, p. 70, 78; Muhammad Qadi, *Silsila al Arifin*, vr. 34a-35a; *Rashahat*, p. 148-152, 432, 434.
724. *Rashahat*, p. 415.
725. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 550, 564; Muhammad Qadi, *ibid*, vr. 47b-48b; *Rashahat*, p. 207, 434; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Quds*, I, 174a.

"One day I went to the market. A man came up to me and said:

"I am hungry. Will you feed me for the sake of Allah?".

At that moment I had nothing to give him. I only had an old turban. I went to one of the restaurants and said to the chef:

"Take this turban of mine. It is old but it is clean. You can dry your dishes with it. In return, feed this hungry man".

The chef gave that poor man some food and he also wanted to return my turban. I did not accept, despite his insistence. Even though I was hungry myself, I waited until that poor man eaten his fill.

When I was young I helped and served many people. I had no horse and no other mount. I would wear one cardigan for the whole year and that was so old that it was falling apart. I would make do with a coat and a simple pair of shoes for three years"[726].

By the grace of Allah, Ubaydullah Ahrar was given a great fortune. He had thousands of workers on his farm. However, this blessed man did not refrain from serving others for the sake of Allah despite all of this. From the day he took his first step on the path of spiritual perfection until his last breath, his help and compassion for others, both those he knew and those he did not know, was unlimited in its greatness.

He speaks of some of his acts of service as follows:

"I had taken on the care of three patients in the Mawlana Qutbuddin Madrasah in Samarkand. When their illness got worse they began to soil their beds. I would wash them with my own hands and dress them. Since I was always looking after them their sickness passed on to me and I was also bedridden. However, even whilst in that state I brought water with urns and cleaned them and continued to wash their clothes"[727].

Ubaydullah Ahrar would serve others at every opportunity and never distinguish between them. He would then secretly leave so that they would not give him anything for his services.[728].

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726. See *Rashahat*, p. 419.
727. Mir Abdulawwal, *ibid*, p. 32-33; *Rashahat*, p. 425.
728. Muhammad Qadi, *ibid*, vr. 37b; *Rashahat*, p. 425.

He used to say:

"I advanced on this path not from the books of tasawwuf, but by serving the people...This is the virtue of serving others. Everyone was taken by a different path and I was taken by this path of service.

This is why serving others is a method that I am content with and that I prefer and love. I advise those who I see with spiritual potential and who are worthy of serving others"[729].

Earning his own livelihood

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) would earn his own livelihood by occupying himself with agriculture, in order to avoid being dependent on anyone[730]. At first he did this by becoming a partner with somebody else. With his partner's support he bought a pair of oxen. Allah, Most High, then blessed his property to such a degree and in so short a time that he had to appoint people to manage his affairs. His property and wealth was beyond measure. His fields numbered more than 1300[731].

Khwaja Ahrar narrates:

"Allah, Most High, bestowed great blessings on my wealth. After every harvest 1000 *batman*[732] *of crops would be stored and when they came out of the storehouse they would be 1400 or 1500 batmans*"[733].

The man who was appointed to look after the storehouse crops said:

"We saw that as we used the grains from the store they would increase. Seeing this, our devotion to Ubaydullah Ahrar grew. One time when I asked him the meaning of this, he replied:

729. *Rashahat*, p. 426-427.
730. Mir Abdulawaal, *ibid*, p. 106; Muhammad Qadi, *ibid*, vr. 34a, 142b-143a.
731. *Rashahat*, p. 423. During recent times in documents published in Moscow entitled *The Semerqand Documents of the XV-XVI Centuries* it is stated that Khwaja Ahrar managed 35000 hectares of land in the region of Samarqand. Amongst the fields are gardens, houses, stores, mills, farming tools, taqqas, schools and mosques. , (Kadir Kose - H. Ibrahim Shimsek, *Golden Chains,* p. 283)
732. One batman is equal to 7697kg.
733. *Rashahat*, p. 424.

***"Our property is for the poor; this is why it increases"*[734].**

Khwaja would give all of the gain that came from these fields to the scholars and students in the madrasahs; to the Sufis from the *taqqas*, *zawiyahs* (dervish lodges) and mosques; and to foundations established to benefit the travellers and the needy Muslims.

Ubaydullah Ahrar had much wealth and property in various cities. He endowed some of these for important acts of service such as mosques, madrasahs and taqqas.[735]

The basis of the matter: Be careful about what you eat

One of his leading students, Mawlanazade narrates:

"One day I prepared a meal and offered it to Ubaydullah Ahrar. He did not even touch the meal and said:

"This meal was not prepared with care! Investigate and see where the fault lies?"

After we investigated carefully we found that at the kitchen where this meal was cooked a piece of wood of doubtful origins was put into the fire to cook it. Learning of this, Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) became angry and said:

"The foundation of this journey of the spirit is to be very careful about what one eats. It is absolutely necessary that one gives great importance to this matter. The effects of the things that enter a person's body will appear in their outer form. All of this displeasure and wretchedness you see is generally a result of eating foods of doubtful origin"[736].

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi's (may Allah have mercy on him) words on this matter are significant:

734. *Rashahat*, p. 424.
735. O. D. Chehovic, *The Samarqand Documents XV-XVI vv. (o Vladeniyah Hodci Ahrara v Srednei Azii i Afganistane)*, Moscow 1974, p. 107-174, 332; Walikhwaja, *ibid,* p. 73.
736. *Rashahat*, p.. 639.

"Last night inspiration came to us in a diferent form because a few mouthfuls of doubtful food that entered the stomach blocked the path of inspiration".

Ubaydullah Ahrar also refrained from eating food from endowments as he believed that it was the right of the poor[737].

His Compassion

The following words of Ubaydullah Ahrar are sufficient to demonstrate the broad scope of his compassion:

"Just as people care about their relatives, so too they should be saddened if some harm comes to any of Allah's creatures"[738].

Ubaydullah Ahrar established many foundations for the benefit of the people. He also paid his taxes with more than was necessary, in order to lighten the load of the people. When the ruler of Tashkent, Mirza Umar, instituted heavy taxes for the people, Ubaydullah Ahrar first sent 250,000 dinars to this ruler, then later 70,000 dinars, in order to lighten one year of the tax burden on the people[739].

When drought came to the region of Turkistan and its people came to Tashkent, Ubaydullah Ahrar appointed one of his disciples, Muhammad Qadi, to feed the people. Muhammad Qadi slaughtered seven sheep every day, had 700 loaves of bread baked, and also offered melons from the villages to feed the poor. Ubaydullah Ahrar complimented this service of his by saying:

"Our teachers would occupy those people about whom they were hopeful in acts of service"[740].

Ahrar would also meet with sultans and advise them and tolerate their problems in order to protect the people from oppression and make the life of the Muslims easy[741].

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737. Mir Abdulawwal, *ibid*, p. 82.
738. *Rashahat*, p. 487.
739. Mawlana Shaykh, *Manaqib-i Khwaja Ubaydullah-i Ahrar*, vr. 12a.
740. Kishmi, *Nasamatu al Quds*, p. 244.
741. Mawlana Shaykh, *ibid*, vr. 72b-73a; *Rashahat*, p. 549.

His efforts to spread Islam

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) spent his entire life guiding the people and performing acts of service. He wrote such valuable works as *Fiqarat*, *Risale Hawraiyya*, *Risale Waldiyah* and *Ruka'at* (*Murase-lat*).

One time he went to Herat to meet with the sultan of that time, Abu Sa'id, and to ask him to lift the trade tax called 'tamga' which was not legal according to the religion. The Sultan lifted this tax in the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand and also promised to lift all of the taxes of the non-Muslims in his country[742].

One of Ubaydullah Ahrar's disciple Mawlana Burhanaddin (may Allah have mercy on them both) who was extremely knowledgeable narrates:

"It was the beginning of the winter season. It was extremely cold. Sultan Ahmad Mirza had organised an expedition to Turkestan. He asked that Ubaydullah Ahrar accompany him. Ubaydullah Ahrar accepted his invitation without hesitation. A group of his friends also joined them and I was one of them. During the journey our Master and his friends endured great difficulties. The weather was very harsh. At many times the following misgiving appeared to me: "If our Master did not want to come on this journey, the Sultan would not have insisted. Neither he nor his friends would then have to endure such difficulties and hardships. There is no benefit for our Master in this journey". However hard I tried to distance this evil thought from my heart I was unable to do so. We finally arrived in Shahruhiye under these difficult circumstances.

Two or three days after we entered the city a sudden intense revolt broke out; four thousand or so Moghul unbelievers along with a thousand or so Ozbek unbelievers had arrived in the city to raid and pillage it. They had already pillaged other towns in that area. The people of the town and some envoys from the leading circles of society came to Ubaydullah Ahrar crying and they asked him to pray for them saying:

"The sultan does not have enough soldiers to put up a resistance to so many unbelieving soldiers. The removal of this calamity looks to your prayers

742. Mir Abdulawwal, *ibid*, p. 72; Mawlana Shaykh, *ibid*, vr. 11a; Muhammad Qadi, *ibid*, vr. 64b-65a.

for good”. The sultan also came to Ubaydullah Ahrar, greatly affected and asked him for his protection and help.

Ubaydullah Ahrar went to where those oppressive soldiers were with a group of his people of knowledge. He spoke with the commander of the soldiers and with their leader and convinced them. They were so moved by his words that they took out the idols that were hanging around their necks and threw them down and became Muslim in the presence of Ubaydullah Ahrar. They also encouraged their soldiers to enter Islam. All of the soldiers present were honoured with becoming Muslim. The soldiers also returned to Ubaydullah Ahrar the two thousand or so slaves they had taken and all of the ten thousand animals they had taken.

Our Master first sent the slaves back to their lands. Then he appointed a *hafiz* and a scholar of *fiqh* to teach the soldiers about Islam. The *hafiz* taught them how to recite the Holy Qur’an; and the scholar of *fiqh* taught them the pillars of Islam, how to worship, treatment of others and perfection of character.

Ubaydullah Ahrar returned to the city. He asked for permission from the Sultan and went to Samarkand. When we set out he said to me:

“Mawlana Burhan! Now do you understand why we endured the hardships of that journey?”[743]

He was present at the conquest of Istanbul

Khwaja Muhammad Qasim, the son of the grandson of Ubaydullah Ahrar, tells of how he travelled across from Central Asia to participate in the conquest of Istanbul:

“One Thursday afternoon, Ubaydullah Ahrar suddenly told us to prepare his horse for him. He quickly mounted it and left Samarkand. He said to his students: “You stay here”.

One of his students by the name of Mawlana Shaykh followed him for a short time. He then informed us that Ubaydullah Ahrar first moved to the right and then to the left and then disappeared from sight. He returned a short

743. *Rashahat*, p. 615-616.

while later. Excitedly his students asked him about the wisdom in this sudden journey. He replied:

"The Turkish Sultan, Mehmed Han, asked me for help. So I went to help him. By the permission of Allah they were victorious..."

Khwaja Abdulhadi, the grandson of Ubaydullah Ahrar, narrates:

"When I went to Istanbul Sultan Bayazid the second said to me:

"My father Fatih told me: "At the most intense time of the battle I sought refuge with my Lord and asked that the Pole of that time come to help me. That man with such and such characteristics appeared in front of me on a white horse and said:

"Do not fear! Victory is yours..."

I said to him:

"The soldiers of the infidels are many in number".

He then opened up his robe and said:

"Look inside".

When I saw an army that flowed like a river inside his sleeve I was shocked and he said:

"All of these men have come to help the army of Islam". Then he continued:

"Now go to that hill, strike the drum three times and give the command for all of the soldiers to attack".

I did as he said. Then that saint joined in the attack along with his army. The promised conquest was realised"[744].

744. See Mawlana Shaykh, *ibid*, vr. 4b-5a; Jami, *Nafahat al Uns*, [Lami i Chalabi part], p. 566-567; Tashkopruzade, *al Shakaiqu an Nu'maniyya, p*. 157-158; Majdi Mehmed, *Hadaiqu al Shaqaiq*, p. 272-273; Hoca Sadeddin, *Taju al Tawarih,* I, 410-411.

Respect and love for the descendants of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)

Ubaydullah Ahrar had the following to say about showing reverence and respect for the descendants of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him):

"I could not live in a land where the Sayyids live. They are at such a superior rank in terms of honour and exaltedness as a result of being from the lineage of the prophet. It is not possible to describe this honour. This is why I do not feel that I would be capable of showing them the required respect".

Similarly Imam Azam was one day teaching a lesson and during the lesson he stood up and sat down a few times. Nobody understood why he did this. Finally one of his students could no longer resist and asked him the reason.

Imam Azam replied:

"Some children from the Sayyids were playing in the garden of the madrasah. Whenever they passed by the door I found myself standing up out of respect for them"[745].

His virtues

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) was an extremely selfless and generous person. One time he had gone to Kash with some of his disciples and when the night fell they set up camp and stayed there the night. When it started to rain he went outside finding some excuse and convinced his students to stay in the tent so that they would not get wet. He then disappeared and passed the entire night under the rain.

A similar event took place on an extremely hot day. There was only one shaded place in the field and in order for his spiritual children to be more comfortable he used the excuse that he wanted to go and see the ploughed fields. He did not return for a long time.

745. *Rashahat*, p. 483-484.

This is the reason why he left because he knew that his students would be hesitant to rest when they were with him. For the days that they were there, Ubaydullah Ahrar continued to walk the fields in this way so that his disciples could be comfortable[746].

Ubaydullah Ahrar was extremely committed to the commands and prohibitions of Islam. He was very adamant in his claim that it was impossible for a person to reach high ranks without following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He also said that to follow the Sunnah was dependent on living in the way of *ahl-Sunnah wa al-jamaa'*[747].

His methods of educating

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that it was necessary to strive for spiritual development as follows:

"If a person occupies themselves with *dhikr*, taking great care and with much effort, he will reach such a rank in so short a time that the sounds he hears and the talk of people around him will seem like *dhikr* to him. Even his own speech will be like this. However, this state will not come about if there is no effort and no care shown"[748].

One time Khwaja Ubaydullah advised one of the dervishes who asked for permission to go to Khorasan as follows:

"When I parted from Alauddin Ghujdawani he said to me: "As you travel promise yourself this: "I will protect my spiritual state until I reach such and such a place. I will not be heedless of Allah". Then when you reach the designated place decide on another place and keep yourself from heedlessness until you reach it. In this way strive to maintain your state of *dhikr* in each place you go and wherever you stop. Continue in this way until presence of heart and spiritual awareness become like second nature to you"[749].

Ubaydullah Ahrar also said:

746. Mir Abdulawwal, *ibid*, p. 153; *Rashahat*, p. 429-430.
747. Ubaydullah Ahrar, *Fikarat*, vr. 74a, 118b, 153a-b, 156a; Arif Nawshahi, "*Risale-i Walidiyya*", p. 69-72.
748. *Rashahat*, p. 68.
749. *Rashahat*, p. 474.

"If presence of heart does not become second nature to a person when they are young and healthy it will become even more difficult to gain this when one is old due to weakness of the body and the mind"[750].

"We should check every hour that passes to see whether it was passed in heedlessness or awareness of the presence of Allah. This is called *muhasaba*. If we passed our time in heedlessness, then we should immediately make a turn around and perform righteous deeds"[751].

"In the path of the Khwajagan the principle of *khalwat dar anjuman* (being with Allah whilst being among the people) is the foundation. This elevated group of people built their path on this principle. This ruling was taken from the following verse: **'...there are men who proclaim His glory morning and evening, not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah'** (Nur, 24:37)"752.

Ubaydullah Ahrar also said that the path of spirituality should be built upon '*muhabbah'* (love). One time he said:

"There were many doors that opened onto the masjid of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). During his last illness he ordered that all other doors be closed except for the one that opened onto the house of Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him). His Companions obeyed this command.

The scholars had much to say about this and we can summarise as follows:

The love felt by Abu Bakr for the Messenger of Allah, was at the peak of the station of '*fana fil Rasul'*. Consequently the above event indicates the following: All bonds other than the bond of love are broken and only the path of love, which is the only path that will allow one to reach their aim, is left open.

In that case, devotion to a True Friend of Allah worthy of guiding one to Allah, must be made with love. The path of the Khwajagan goes back to Abu

750. *Rashahat*, p. 156.
751. *Rashahat*, p. 74.
752. *Rashahat*, p. 621-622.

Bakr and takes his love as its foundation. Their path in reality is to look out for this bond of love and never lose it"[753].

His death

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) became ill in the month of Muharram in the hijri year 895 and after an illness that lasted for 89 days he passed away at the age of 89. This coincidence reminded his disciples of the following hadith:

"One day of fever is equal to one year's atonement for one's sins"[754].

Even when his illness became very intense Ubaydullah Ahrar performed his prayers on time and placed much importance on praying them at the start of the appointed time. In the month of Rabi al-awwal he had become extremely ill. It was time for the evening prayer and he asked:

"Is it time for the evening prayer?"

They replied that it was and he performed his prayer by the indicating with his head only. When the time for the late night prayer arrived he gave his last breath and was reunited with the mercy of Allah. The date was the 29th of Rabi al-awwal in the year 895 which corresponds to the 20th of February 1490[755].

His blessed body was buried in the suburb of Khwaja Kafshir in Samarkand[756].

His words of wisdom

• "The aim of man's creation is servanthood. The essence of servanthood is to seek refuge in Allah in a state of constant humility, annihilation, a sense of nothingness before Him and deep reverence. It is to contemplate on His

753. *Rashahat*, p. 460.
754. Munawi, *Kunuzu al Haqaiq,* nr: 3304; Ajluni, *Kashfu al Khafa,* I, 367, nr: 1173.
755. *Rashahat*, p. 652.
756. *Rashahat*, p. 653; Sayyid Sharif Rakim, *Tarih-i Rakim,* vr. 76a-79a.

greatness in all circumstances and never forget that He is with us at every instant”[757].

• In a letter written to one of his disciples he stated:

“The reality of servanthood is seeking refuge in Allah with humility, reverence, entreaty and a broken heart. That is, it is to be in a state of constant supplication. This state arises when the awareness of the greatness of Allah becomes truly established in the heart. Gaining happiness is dependent on love. The establishment of love is dependent on following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), the master of those who went before and who came after. Following the Messenger of Allah is possible by knowing this method. In order to learn this method one should continue in the assemblies of the scholars and the people of *hal*. However one should remain distant from scholars who use their knowledge to gain worldly benefits and worldly posts. One should be wary of being with dervishes who dance and perform the *sama* (without being wary of the halal, haram or the doubtful) and taking and giving without hesitation. One should also avoid listening to words that are not in accordance with the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa al jama*’. One should seek knowledge for the sake of the manifestation of true wisdom that leads one to follow the Messenger of Allah, and that is all...”[758].

• “On this path one should clean and preserve their breath with *dhikrullah* and give great importance to this. That is, one should breathe every breath in awareness of the presence of Allah and in a state of spiritual awareness”[759].

• “The duty that falls upon the faithful disciple is to enter the hearts of the Friends of Allah and carry out their commands with great sincerity. They should consider their desires above their own”[760].

• “The traveller may sometimes lose his spiritual state. Generally the reasons for this are as follows:

- Acting in opposition to the rulings of Islam, for instance eating, food that is prohibited or of doubtful origins...

757. *Rashahat*, p. 521.
758. *Rashahat*, p. 629.
759. *Rashahat*, p. 63.
760. *Rashahat*, p. 162.

- Transgressing the rights of others, for instance, backbiting a fellow believer...

- Being unmerciful towards the creatures of Allah or harming them. For instance harming a cat or dog without good reason..."[761]

• "Too much hunger and sleeplessness can harm the mind. Such a mind can be weakened so that it cannot perceive reality. This is why there are some errors in the spiritual insights of some of the people of *riyazat* (abstinence)"[762].

• "Even if all positive spiritual states and ecstasy were to be given to us, but within us we do not bear the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa al jama*, we will see all of these states as debasement. Even if we bear within us all faults and defects but our inner world is rightly founded upon the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'*, then we do not see any harm in this"[763].

• "It is easy to say: "*Ana al-Haqq*" (I am the Real). What is difficult is annihilating the *nafs*"[764].

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761. See Mir Abdulawwal, *ibid* p. 77; *Rashahat*, p. 492-493.
762. *Rashahat*, p. 518.
763. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 578, no: 193.
764. Abdulghai ibn Abi Said, *Huwalghani Risale,* p. 159.

20. Muhammad Zahid

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1529]

Muhammad Zahid (may Allah have mercy on him) was the grandson of Yaqub Charkhi. Benefitting from Yaqub Charkhi's successors, for many years Muhammad Zahid lived in asceticism and seclusion, advancing in the path of tasawwuf.

Later he set out to benefit from and attend the talks of Ubaydullah Ahrar. When he arrived near Samarkand, Ubaydullah Ahrar met him on the way. He showed him great respect and attention because he was the grandson of his shaykh Yaqub Charkhi (may Allah have mercy on them).

After spending time with Muhammad Zahid, Khwaja Ahrar saw that he had great potential in the way of tasawwuf and he accepted him as a disciple. In a short time, Muhammad Zahid made great progress and he was made a successor.

Returning to his homeland, Muhammad Zahid began to guide the people there. He passed away in the hijri year 936 in the month of Rabi al-awwal. His tomb is in the province of Surhanderya in Uzbekistan, in the village of Washiwar in the district of Altinsay. It is said that there is also a tomb of his in the surrounds of Dushanba.

His words of wisdom

• "One should never abandon the struggle against one's *nafs* in order to reach a certain spiritual state and advance in the stations on the *sayr u*

suluq. The *nafs*, which is the source of all evils, and Satan who incites it, are ever awake. This is why it is necessary to always be aware in the face of the assaults of the *nafs* and struggle against it".

• "The well-mannered people of the path of tasawwuf are like flames that light the way for those who wish to advance. Whoever wishes to advance in the spiritual realm and become a person of spirituality must abide by the etiquette put forth by the great men of this path".

21. Dervish Muhammad Imkenegi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [d. 1562]

Dervish Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him), who is the son of the sister of Muhammad Zahid, was from the village of Imkene in Shahr-i Sebz. He is from the lineage of the caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Keeping company with his maternal uncle, Muhammad Zahid, and serving him, he advanced in the path of tasawwuf and was made a successor.

For a long time Dervish Muhammad occupied himself with teaching the Holy Qur'an and religious knowledge to the students of the village in order to conceal his spiritual state. He lived a very simple and humble life. It was only years later that people realised that he was a great Friend of Allah, through the indication of Nureddin Muhammad Khafi, the Kubrevi master. After that the people paid more attention to Dervish Muhammad and began to form assemblies around him.

Dervish Muhammad occupied himself with agriculture and earned his own livelihood. He always showed extreme care to act with *taqwa* and *azimah*.

It is recorded that he was competent in the sciences of the madrasah and hadith in particular and he wrote a treatise on some of the deeper matters of tasawwuf.

To those of his students and others who asked him for counsel, he advised them to stay away from *bid'a* (innovations in religion) and live a life in harmony with the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be

upon him). He told people to act in accordance with the etiquette of tasawwuf. He said that it was vital to willingly enter upon the spiritual training provided by the perfected guides who have embraced the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). The spiritual methods of training and adab that true guides inculcate in their followers are nothing more than an application of the '*tazkiya'* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) brought to all times and places.

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Dervish Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 970 in the month of Muharram in Asfiraz a village to the north of Imkene. Today this place is in the township of Kitab in the region of Kash-kaderya in Uzbekistan.

22. Khwaja Muhammad Imkenegi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1512 - 1600]

The son of Dervish Muhammad, Khwaja Muhammad Imkenegi (may Allah have mercy on them both) was born in the hijri year 918. As a young man, he pursued his studies in the madrasahs of Samarkand and Bukhara and at the same time he was trained in tasawwuf by his father[765]. When his father passed away, he began to guide the people as the successor of his father.

According to narrations, one night the ruler of Shaybani, Abdullah Han (1583-1598) saw in his dream that he went to the palace of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). There was an honourable man standing at the door who was presenting the case of the people who entered from time to time to the prophet and he was bringing back news from him. A little while later, he brought the sword sent by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and tied it around the waist of Abdullah Han. When he awoke Abdullah Han began a search for this man that he saw in his dream and finally realised it was Khwajagi Imkenegi. He paid him great honour and respect and began to visit him frequently[766].

Khwajagi spent a period of his life in Samarkand guiding the people and giving his talks on tasawwuf in the masjid. He would serve the people and despite his old age he would personally occupy himself with their meals. He

765. Muhamma Murad Kazani, *Nafaisu al Sanihat*, p. 7.
766. See Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazarat al Quds*, I, vr. 202b-203b; Muhammad Hasan, *Khalat-i Mashaih-i Naqshibandiyya*, p. 129; Muhammad Nurbahsh, *Tadhkira*, p. 161-2.

gave great importance to acting with *azimah* and was extremely sensitive about abiding by the commands of the religion.

One day in one of his assemblies, one of his disciples asked for permission to read certain literary works. He said:

"Every day in our assemblies, we read from the book of hadith called *Mishkatu al-Masabih*. Without a doubt, it is much better to mention the words of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) than the words of others"[767].

Khwajagi Imkenegi (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away at the age of 90 in the hijri year 1008 (1600AD). He was buried in the village of Imkene, in the town of Kitab in Uzbekistan[768].

767. Kishmi, *Nasamat al Quds,* p. 325.
768. Muhammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al Makamat*, p. 83; Lahuri, *Hazinat al Asfiya*, I, 605.

23. Muhammad Baqi Billah

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1564 - 1603]

Muhammad Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the hijri year 971 in Kabul[769]. He began to study at a young age at the foot of his teacher, Mawlana Sadiq Hilwahi. Then he went to Samarkand together with his teacher to continue his studies in the madrasahs there.

Baqi Billah benefited from the company of many of the Sufis. He dedicated himself completely to tasawwuf and to reading its works. He received his *ijaza* from many *tariqahs*. He saw himself as a disciple of Bahauddin Naqshiband in his dream. This dream increased his connection with the Naqshibandiyya even more[770]. A short time later he saw Ubaydullah Ahrar in his dream. Taking his advice he aligned himself with Khwajagi Muhammad Imkenegi[771] who spent three days in seclusion with him. After this time spent conversing, Khawaji Imkenegi saw that he had reached a state of spiritual perfection. He gave him his *ijaza* and advised him to go to India to guide the people there.

Since he did not consider himself worthy of this elevated duty, Muhammad Baqi Billah did not want to accept it. He then performed the prayer of *istikhara* on the advice of his shaykh. In his dream, he saw a parrot perched on a branch and thought to himself: "If this parrot comes down from the branch

769. Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazarat al Quds*, I, vr. 206b; Muhammad Ikram, *Rud-i Kawthar*, Lahore 1996, p. 191-192.
770. Kishmi, *Zubdat al Makamat, p*. 10; Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid*, I, vr. 210a. Due to this affiliation in his dream he was known as Uwaysi.
771. Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid*, I, vr. 208b-209a.

and lands on my hand, then this trip to India will be the means of much good". As he was thinking such, the parrot flew down and landed on his hand. He dribbled his saliva into the beak of the parrot and the parrot began to speak and placed sugar in the mouth of Baqi Billah. When he awoke he related his dream to his shaykh. Khwajagi said:

"The parrot is a bird from India, so go there immediately. With the blessing of your being there, a great saint will appear who will proclaim the truth, and blessings will reach us through him"[772].

Accepting the advice of his Shaykh he went to India and spent a year in Lahore. He then set up a Sufi lodge in Firuzabad in Delhi and continued to guide people from there[773].

At that time Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) had arrived in Delhi. On the advice of his friend Mawlana Hasan Kashmiri, he went to see Baqi Billah. Baqi Billah immediately recognised the great potential within him and despite him never suggesting to anyone that they become his disciple, he requested that he align himself with him and stay for a while in his lodge and in his company. Imam Rabbani accepted and aligned himself with the Naqshibandiyya.

A short time later Baqi Billah gave Imam Rabbani his *ijaza* to guide the people and he began to refer his students to him.

He called each of them, one by one, and bade them farewell and then sent them to Imam Rabbani[774].

His virtues

Muhammad Baqi Billah was extremely devoted to the commands and prohibitions of Islam. He would frequently turn to the pious *faqihs*. He gave great importance to lawful provision, in fact he even desired that the one cooking a meal should be in a state of *ihsan* during its preparation, that is, he should be in a state of awareness of the presence of Allah, and not heedless.

772. Kishmi, *ibid*, p. 140-141; Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid*, II, 43-44; Muhammad Murad, *Nafaisu al Sanihat*, p. 12.
773. Kishmi, *ibid*, p. 14.
774. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 378.

He shunned ostentation and strove to hide his miracles. Whenever an ill person was brought to him, he cured him by the permission of Allah but in order to hide this wonder-working of his, he would look in the books of medicine as if he was treating the patient using these[775].

Muhammad Baqi Billah was extremely kind and compassionate towards other human beings and animals. When there was a famine in Lahore he said to those who brought him his meal:

"It is not apt for us to eat whilst the people are dying from hunger". He would then have the food sent to the poor[776].

He made great efforts so that his disciples could advance spiritually. Imam Rabbani says about this matter:

"...During our teacher's talks, the seekers would receive such benefits that could not be obtained even through difficult acts of abstention and striving..."[777]

His humility

Khwaja Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him) was extremely humble and gentle. He would try to hide his elevated state from the people and did not consider himself worthy of the state of guiding others. He would put forth many excuses to those seekers who came to benefit from him:

"This poor man before you is not as you think. Therefore go elsewhere. If you find a true guide, then come back and tell me so that I can go to him and serve him. Maybe then I can find a cure for the ails of my heart".

Thus he would occupy himself with serving those who came to him and uniting their hearts, distancing himself from the claim of being a guide.

Overall he preferred silence and speaking little. He only spoke when he had to or when it was necessary to explain a subtle matter. Then he would explain clearly in order to enlighten the one he was addressing[778].

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775. Rushdi, *Malfuzat*, p. 28, 31; Dahlawi, *Kalimatu al Sadiqin*, p. 179; Kishmi, *Zubdat al Makamat*, p. 15, 24-26; Muhammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al Makamat*, p. 89.
776. Kishmi, *ibid*, p. 19-21.
777. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ghabiyya,* 5th part.
778. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 23, 37; Abu al-Hasan an Nadwi, *Imam Rabbani,* p. 143.

On his travels from Lahore to Delhi, without having gone one or two kilometres, he would often see a poor man and he would descend from his mount and put him on it and he himself would walk. He would cover his face with his turban so nobody would recognise him and see his generosity and act of selflessness. When he approached the city, he would get back on his mount in order to hide what he did[779].

He never saw himself above his friends or even the common people. A youth who lived in the house next to him used to drink alcohol and commit all manner of sins. One day his disciple, Husameddin Dahlawi, complained to the government officials about this young man. They then came and imprisoned him. When Baqi Billah learned of this, he called his disciple and told him that he was offended by this act of his. His disciple said:

“Master, that man is such a sinner, such a worthless person that I cannot enumerate all of his evils. He kept bringing harm to those around him”. Baqi sighed deeply and said:

“We never see ourselves being so superior to him so that we can censure him!” He then went to the rulers and requested that that youth be sent free. The youth then repented and became righteous.

The method of tasawwuf is to refrain from the hate of the sin carrying over to hate of the sinner and looking upon the sinner as being in need of a cure and of compassion like an injured bird. They need to be guided with a sweet tongue.

Baqi Billah was so affected with having a broken heart and seeing his own faults that if one of his disciples were to make a mistake he would say:

“This is a reflection of our own vile traits. The vileness in us is reflected in them. What can they do?” He would then immediately take account of himself and look to see whether there was any form of neglect on his own part.

If he saw a person openly act contrary to the commands of the religion, he would not directly and harshly warn them, but rather bring up the topic gently, using analogies and allegorical stories, not wanting to offend him. Since he did not consider himself superior or different to other people, he did not openly warn or advise them. Nobody would be censured by his blessed

779. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 29-30.

tongue or in his assemblies. Whenever there was someone in his presence who was thinking belittling thoughts about another Muslim, Baqi Billah would immediately sense this and begin to talk about that Muslim's good qualities and praise him[780].

One time when he learned that he was being censured by certain people, he taught the student that brought him this news the following beautiful method of training:

"...Whenever we are attributed something bad or rebuked we immediately look to ourselves and find a vile trait of some sort. We see such signs as counsel. After you informed me of this news I found in myself a flaw and defect. I sought refuge in the grace of Allah. By His permission I will be freed of it also"[781].

One day, one of the righteous men sent a letter filled with desires and requests to one of his sincere students. This letter was presented to Muhammad Baqi Billah. In great humility he wrote the following on the back of that letter:

"Unfortunately there is no strength to act within this powerless one. If Allah, Most High, bestows on me, this wretched man, who is mourning his days of the past, a few more days of life, he will pursue this aim with great effort and dedicate his life to this path. May Allah, Most High, allow me to submit my affairs of both worlds to His divine power and free me from all other occupations. Amen o Lord of the worlds..."

I request from this brother of mine, that he wipe his face over the ground in order that this desire of mine comes about and he prays to Allah for my desire to be fulfilled. Allah Most High immediately accepts prayers that are made in the absence of the other. My prayers are with you sir..."[782].

His death

When Muhammad Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him) was 40 years old he fell ill. During his last moments he gave his farewells to everyone

780. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 31-32; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, ibid, p. 144.
781. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 62.
782. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 37.

with his glance and his students and friends began to weep. Muhammad Baqi Billah was smiling and looking at them in amazement as if to say:

"What sort of dervishes are you that you do not show contentment for fate and you weep?"

At that point one of his disciples said with a broken heart:

"O, Lord of the worlds". Muhammad Baqi Billah immediately turned his blessed face that way. When one of the people there said:

"This act of turning of our teacher is due to his enthusiasm to hear the noble name of the True Beloved", his blessed eyes filled with tears. The time for the afternoon prayer was approaching. He began to proclaim loudly "Allah, Allah..." and saying so, he finally passed away[783].

The date was the 25th of *Jamadhi al akhir* 1012 (November 30, 1603). He was buried in a place called Kademgah in Delhi[784], where the blessed footprint of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was found and Muhammad Baqi Billah very much desired to be buried there. Today this place is known as the Karim Nabi district[785].

Most of the poems and prose of Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him) and some of his letters written to his disciples were published in a work called *Kulliyat Baqi Billah.*

His words of wisdom

• "If a person loves another person due to his qualities of being knowledgeable or brave, this love will end once those qualities are lost. But loving someone for His sake is not like this. This is to love another without basing this love on certain reasons or qualities. Just as this love does not increase when these qualities increase, it also does not decrease when they decrease"[786].

783. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 43.
784. Rushdi, *Malfuzat*, p. 65; Dahlawi, *ibid*, p. 162-3; Kishmi, *Zubdat al Makamat*, p. 31-33.
785. Muhammad Murad, *ibid,* p. 18; Kawthari, *Irgamu al Marid,* p. 69; Necdet Tosun, *Bahauddin Naqshiband,* p. 202; Cebecioğlu, "Muhammed Bâkì Billâh-i Kabulî", *Allah Dostları,* Şule Yay., İstanbul 1995, VIII, 191.
786. Dahlawi, *ibid*, p. 168, 169.

• "Do not keep the company of or befriend those who do not have the desire for knowledge of Allah with their heart. Flee from scholars who use their knowledge for rank, position or to be praised as you would flee from a lion"[787].

• "The parts and stations of *marifah* are many. The truth of the matter is to be upon the uprightness informed by our religion"[788].

• "To fast is to take up one of the attributes of Allah, Most High, for Allah, Most High, is free of the need for eating and drinking"[789].

• "The great men of this path were extremely hard working and refined. Their path is without a doubt the path of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)"[790].

• "For the people of contentment, trials are not misfortunes. They do not rebel in the face of these trials for the One who sent them was Allah, Most High"[791].

• "Following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and being upon the creed of the *ahl al sunnah wa jama* and bearing in one's heart devotion and love for the great Khwajagan is better than all of the bounties of this world"[792].

• "The essence of the matter is this: One's heart should be with Allah and one's body should be at work"[793].

• "Beware that you do not become one who eats whatever he finds in heedlessness of whether it is lawful or unlawful"[794].

• "Never let go of the end of the rope of hope"[795].

787. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 359.
788. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
789. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
790. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
791. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
792. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
793. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
794. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 360.
795. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 361.

• "A life of tasawwuf which does not have its basis in the commands of the Holy Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) will not allow a person to reach Allah".

• "One should strive to read the Holy Qur'an and understand it the way it was understood by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)".

• "When the heart is filled with love of this world or its pleasures, one's bond to Almighty Allah is weakened. This is why one should break the bonds to this world and keep the heart upright and turned towards Allah, Most High".

• "It is very important to always be in a state of ablution and eat from what is lawful. One should shun all sins, such as backbiting, spreading rumours, belittling the believers, hostility towards the Muslims, holding a grudge, becoming angry with or treating harshly those who are under one's care. This is the basis of our path. A task carried out in the absence of these is not in harmony with the pleasure of Allah. If there is any fault or neglect in what we have just mentioned, then one should immediately repent and ask for forgiveness and hold on ever more tightly to the duties given to one by the great men of this path so that the mystery of the following verse can become apparent **"Good actions eradicate bad actions"** (Hud, 11:114)[796].

796. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 359.

24. Imam Rabbani Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1564 - 1624]

Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the month of Shawwal in the hijri year 971 in the town of Sirhindī in India. Since his lineage goes back to the caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he is known by the title Faruqi.

His father was Abdulahad Efendi and he was a shaykh who was given licence in the Chishtiyya and Qadiri tariqahs, and who had perfected the inner and outer sciences. He was a very virtuous man of knowledge and wisdom.

Ahmad Sirhindi began his studies by memorising the Holy Qur'an. He became a *hafiz* of the Qur'an in a very short time. He learned most of the sciences from his honourable father and some from the great scholars of that time. A short time later he went to Siyalkut, which was a great centre of learning. He studied both the rational (mathematics, literature, logic etc.) and transmitted sciences (*tafsir*, *kalam*, *hadith*, and *fiqh*) from various scholars. He placed great importance on the sciences of tafsir, hadith, and fiqh in particular. When he was seventeen he returned to his father having progressed greatly in the outer sciences and he began to teach. During this time he also received his *ijazah* from Qadi Behlul Bedahshani to teach tafsir and hadith[797].

When he was eighteen or twenty he wrote *Isbat al-Nubuwwa,* in response to the heedless scholars of the palace who were supporters of the philosophers and who saw them as almost being superior to the prophets. He proved

797. Kishmi, *Barakat-i Ahmadiyya,* p. 128; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Hazarat al Quds,* II, 31-32.

the importance and necessity of prophethood using rational and transmitted proofs. He also wrote other works during this time.

A short time later he aligned himself with his father and frequented his talks. He focused all of his efforts on the training of tasawwuf. He did not leave his father and go elsewhere in order to refrain from lacking in his service to him.

His father Abdulahad Efendi passed away in the hijri year 1007 (1599 AD). A short time before he passed away he gave the successorship (*khilafa*) to his son Imam Rabbani Ahmad Faruqi (may Allah have mercy on him).

After the death of his father, Imam Rabbani set out from Sirhind to go for the Hajj in the hijri year 1008, in the month of *Rabi al-akhir*. He was 37 years old. When he arrived in Delhi, he visited Baqi Billah on the advice of his friend. After remaining in his company for a time he became his disciple[798].

Imam Rabbani stayed with Baqi Billah for approximately two and half to three months. After the the time for the Hajj passed, he returned to his hometown. He communicated with his shaykh through letters, informing him of his spiritual state. A short time later he visited his master once more. During this visit he was given *khilafah*, or *ijazah* (licence) to guide others. He stayed with his teacher for approximately two months and then returned to his hometown where he began to guide the people there using the methods of the Naqshibandiyya. At this period he considered himself as being spiritually deficient and considered retreating from the people, but he continued to guide them upon the insistence of his disciples[799].

On his third visit to his shaykh, his shaykh greeted him on the way and paid him many compliments and referred the training of most of his disciples to him[800].

Even though Imam Rabbani had reached a very high station and was extremely virtuous, he treated his teacher with such respect and courtesy that more could not be possible. One time, his teacher sent one of his students to call him to him. When he heard that his teacher had called him, Imam Rab-

798. Kishmi, *ibid, p*. 138-140; Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid.* II, 34.
799. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat,* I, 726, no: 234; II, 319, no: 290.
800. Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid,* II, 37-38.

bani's colour changed and he began to shiver like some poor wretch in fear. His teacher also showed him great respect and love[801].

After the death of Baqi Billah, Imam Rabbani continued to guide the people in Sirhind and he also wrote letters to his disciples in faraway lands and to rulers of other lands. In his letters that he sent to his disciples he would deal with the fine details of tasawwuf, whereas in the letters he wrote to state rulers he would touch on general matters such as Islamic rulings and devotion to the denomination of the *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'*.

Every year in the month of *Jami al-akhir*, Imam Rabbani would go and visit the blessed tomb of his master who died in that month and then return to Sirhind[802].

His relationship with the Sultans

Originally Akbar Shah, the Moghul sultan of India (Baburlu) was a man of pure faith and religion. He did not know how to read or write. He had remained ignorant and uneducated as a result of the political situation and the resulting migrations. This is the reason why, with time, he deviated and became influenced by the 'scholars' around him, who were only interested in personal benefit. These 'scholars' tried to gain favour with the sultans and the rulers, making themselves appear good to them, and making all sorts of compromises in order to cause many doubts and reservations about Islam. By bringing to mind matters of controversy they made the wealthy deviate from the true path[803].

801. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 144, 148-152.
802. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 144.
803. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 30, no: 67. **Imam Rabbani** said about such scholars:

"The people of Islam should feel it a duty upon themselves to help their Muslim sultan. They are required to guide the sultan to elevate the sharia' and strengthen the religion. Their support for the sultan can be either in word or action. The most urgent support is in their words. Furthemore, the best of these is to explain in the most suitable manner the declarations of the sharia and the principles of aqida in accordance with the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the community. In this way they can prevent certain deviated and innovating people who try to block the way and ruin the situation. Such help is particular to the *ahl al sunnah* who have the hereafter in mind. To be with scholars whose sole efforts are running after the world and lowly benefits is a fatal poison. Their mischief spreads to others. Whatever calamities befell us in the past are all from their evil. These are the ones who caused the prior sultan to deviate from the true path. It was not enough that they caused the sultan to deviate but these evil scholars are

As a result, Akbar Shah lost his religious grounding and appointed non-Muslims to important places in the government. He also took some Hindu women into his harem. Under the encouragement of those close to him, he invented a new religion called *Din-i Ilahi*, under the guise of uniting Islam and Hinduism.

Mosques were torn down in some areas and Hindu temples built in their place. Akbar Shah began to order people to prostrate to him out of respect. This was not a problem for Hindus, but for the sincere Muslims it was a big problem.

Certain worldly-minded, self-seeking and heedless scholars who wished to gain favour with the Sultan issued fatwas saying that it was permissible to prostrate to the sultan for the purpose of greeting, and not with the intention of worship.

Imam Rabbani went to the capital Agra (Akbarabad) and met with certain men close to the Sultan saying:

"The Sultan has rebelled against Allah, Most High, and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). Tell him that his kingdom and power will be destroyed. Let him repent and follow the path of Allah and His Messenger".

Some of the state men in high positions paid great respect to Imam Rabbani. They tried very hard to guide the Sultan to the straight path, but Akbar Shah was trapped in the convulsions of his own created religion and did not pay any attention to any advice. At this time the astrologers of Akbar Shah informed him that his kingdom and power would soon be destroyed. Extremely distressed by this, the Sultan saw a terrifying dream. Upon this dream he proclaimed in a decree:

"Those who wish may embrace Islam and those who wish may embrace Din-i Ilahi. There will be no force nor compulsion".

He then had some tents set up on the occasion of a festival. Those who believed in Din-i Ilahi set up nice tents and filled them with food. However,

at the head of the 72 sects that are said to be deviant. There are no other people other than evil scholars whose deviancy passes on to others. Today, many ignorant people who claim to be Sufis are like these evil scholars. Their false ideas influence others" (Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 243, no: 47)

the Muslim tents showed signs of poverty. Imam Rabbani went together with those devoted to him, and settled in the Muslim tents. He took some dirt in his hand and tossed it towards the tents belonging to the members of the Din-i Ilahi. At that a violent wind broke out. Whilst Akbar Shah and his followers went through a very difficult time, the Muslims suffered no problems. After this clear divine warning, some statesmen and commanders became disciples of Imam Rabbani[804].

In 1605, Akbar Shah died and his son Jahangir assumed the throne. Imam Rabbani was very pleased at this since Jahangir was a man devoted to Islam.

Imam Rabbani sent many of his khalifas to various regions in the land in order to guide and preach to the people there. For instance he sent Mir Muhammad Numan to Dekken, having given him his *khilafah* to guide others. Hundreds of people would gather at his lodge to make *dhikr* of Allah, delving into contemplation and studying. He gave *khilafah* to Shaykh Bediuddin Saharanpuri and then sent him first to his hometown and then from there to Agra. In this way, many statesmen joined his circle of guidance and thousands of members of the army repented in his presence.

Imam Rabbani also sent seventy people under the leadership of Mawlana Muhammad Qasim to Turkestan. He sent forty people under Mawlana Ferruh Hussain to Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Anatolia. He sent ten perfected people to Kashgar, under Mawlana Muhammad Sadqi and thirty people under Shaykh Ahmad Barki towards Turkestan, Badahshan and Khorasan. These people enjoyed great success wherever they went and a great mass of people benefitted from them[805].

The number of people gathered around Imam Rabbani grew day by day. His congregation had become so numerous that it became very difficult for the nobles and rulers to visit him due to the great crowds. Sultan Jahangir became very vexed by this attention and called Imam Rabbani to him in the capital of Agra in the year 1619. He called him to account about certain ideas about Sufi life found in one of his letters. He was convinced by Imam Rabbani's reasonable explanation but some of those close to him said:

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804. Mujaddidi, *Rawzat al Qayyumiyya*, I, 221-227; Muhammad Halm Sharkpuri, *Imam Rabbani* (trans. Ali Genceli), Konya 1978, p. 29-33.
805. Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *Imam Rabbani,* p. 156.

"This shaykh did not make the prostration of greeting to you and he has many disciples in the army. In time, he may cause unrest with his crowds of disciples and bring harm to your kingdom. The shaykh has so many disciples in the army that he could even make a claim to be the sultan".

The viziers and servants of the Sultan at that time were mainly from deviant branches of Islam. They harboured an intense anger towards Imam Rabbani because he had written some letters and a separate treatise which criticised some of the schools which lay outside of the sharia. It was they who were provoking the Sultan[806].

As a result Jahangir imprisoned Imam Rabbani, who was at the age of 55, in the Govaliyar fortress. He seized his books, his garden, his well and his house and moved his family to another place. Imam Rabbani stayed in prison for one year and whilst there, he taught the people about Islam and guided them. Some of them even became Muslim[807]. Due to the hardships he suffered for the sake of Allah, he was brought to even higher spiritual ranks[808].

A year later Jahangir regretted what he had done and let Imam Rabbani go free on the condition that he remain in the barracks[809].

Jahangir then requested that Imam Rabbani become his advisor on matters of religion. After discussing the matter for a period Imam Rabbani realised that Jahangir was sincere and he accepted his offer under the following conditions:

1) The prostration of greeting to the Sultan was to be lifted,

2) All of the mosques that were torn down and destroyed were to be rebuilt,

3) The commands forbidding the slaughtering of cows were to be annulled,

4) The judges, muftis and rulers were to be careful about their Islamic rulings,

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806. Badahshi, *Manaqibu al Hazarat*, vr. 39a-40b.
807. Badahshi, *ibid,* vr. 41a; Muhammad Murad Kazani, *Tarjumat al Ahwali al Imam Rabbani*, *Mu'arrabu al Maktubat (ad-Durar al Maknunati an Nafisa)*, Mecca 1317 kenarında, I, 58-59; Necdet Tosun, *Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi*, Istanbul 2005, p. 29.
808. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 180, no: 5; III, 182, no: 6.
809. Badahshi, *ibid,* vr. 41a-41b.

5) The *jizya* tax would be reinstated,

6) All innovations (*bid'a*) were to be lifted and Islamic rulings instated in their place,

7) Those who had been imprisoned on account of their religiousness were to be set free.

As we can see Imam Rabbani had no personal demands or requests for himself. His sole aim was to repair the damage done by previous rulers and prevent the hardships from previous times from resurfacing[810].

Imam Rabbani realised that being close to the Sultan was a good opportunity for him to encourage him in the principles of Islam. He attended the assemblies of the Sultan and spoke about religious matters. Those in attendance listened to him with great attention[811].

Having kept silent during the first period of his rule, when the mosques were being destroyed and criticised for this by Imam Rabbani, Jahangir finally became so dedicated to Islam that as a result of the blessings of these talks, he had those mosques rebuilt and even was able to slaughter a cow.

Imam Rabbani stayed with Sultan Jahangir for four years. During this time he continued to write letters to his friends. In 1033 he was completely set free and he then returned to Sirhind together with his sons who had come to visit him. He spent the last year of his life in his hometown.

Compliance with the sharia above all else

In great pain Imam Rabbani witnessed many innovations and false practices establish themselves in the lives of the Muslims. He struggled and strived to bring back into practice Allah's rulings. In his talks, his letters and his works he frequently made mention of this matter:

"There are three parts to the sharia: ***'ilm*** (creed and law), ***amal*** (deeds) and ***ikhlas*** (tasawwuf). The sharia cannot become a reality until all of these are practiced. When the sharia is put into practice the pleasure of Allah, which is above all worldly and otherworldly happiness, will have been attained.

810. Halil Ibrahim Shimsek, *Mujaddids in Ottoman times,* Istanbul 2004, p. 66-67.
811. Imam Rabbani, ibid, III, 318, no: 43.

The Holy Qur'an states: **'And Allah's good pleasure is even greater'** (Tawbah, 9:72). The sharia guarantees all worldly and otherworldly happiness. There is no other purpose or goal needed beyond the sharia. *Tariqa* and *haqiqa* which are the focus of the Sufis, are the servants of the sharia. These complete the third part of the sharia, which is *ikhlas*. In that case, the purpose of attaining these is to complete the sharia, otherwise there is no other end beyond the sharia.

The spiritual states, inspirations, spiritual knowledge and *marifah* revealed to Sufis during their *sayr u suluq* are not their primary aim. On the contrary they are like the imaginings and fantasies given to the disciples of the tariqa for the purpose of using them to train them. One should surpass all of these and reach the station of *rida* (contentment with Allah) which is the peak of the stations of the *suluq* and *jazba*. The aim of passing through the stations of the *tariqah* and reality (*haqiqah*) is nothing more than undergoing training of *ikhlas*, which is necessary to reach the station of *rida*[812].

Knowledge is essential for the human being. However this knowledge should lead the servant to *taqwa* that is fear of Allah and to *marifatullah*. The Holy Qur'an states:

'...Only those of His slaves with knowledge have fear of Allah' (Fatir, 35:28).

A person should act upon their knowledge and their actions should be done with *ikhlas* (sincerity). Actions are only accepted if they are done with *ikhlas*. Zunnun-i Misri has said:

"*All people are dead, except for those with knowledge. All people with knowledge are asleep except for those who act upon their knowledge. And those who act upon their knowledge are at risk of being deceived, except for those who are sincere. And the sincere face great danger in this world at every instant...*"[813]

In short, '*ilm*, *amal*, and *ikhlas* complete each other.

812. Imam Rabbani, ibid, I, 206, no: 36.
813. Bayhaqi, *Shuabu al Iman,* V, 345.

Imam Rabbani would relate the following words of Shah Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on them both) in order to illustrate that tasawwuf and the sharia are no different from each other:

"The aim of *sayr u suluq* is to transform knowledge that is known in summary into that which is known in detail and to know that which is known by proof to that which is known by personal experience"[814].

According to this then *tariqa* is to reach the reality of the sharia', otherwise it is not something different from these[815]. The *batin* (inner aspect) completes the *zahir* (outer) and perfects it[816]. This is why *kashf* that is in opposition to the outer aspect of the sharia' and to the consensus of the scholars of the *ahl ul Sunnah* are not accepted[817].

Imam Rabbani said:

"Spiritual states are bound by the sharia; the sharia is not bound by these states. The sharia is sound and definite, and its correctness is supported by revelation. Spiritual states on the other hand are conjective and they depend on *kashf* and inspiration"[818].

"It is more virtuous to pray one of the ritual obligatory prayers in congregation than to pass through thousands of difficult Sufi struggles. Also *dhikr* and *tafakkur* which are done in accordance with the principles of the sharia are also very virtuous and important"[819].

"My dear spiritual children! We must always spend our time in remembrance of Almighty Allah. All of our affairs that are carried out in accordance with the sharia, even shopping, are accepted as *dhikr*. In that case, let us abide by the rulings of the sharia in all of our states and actions so that they can all be considered *dhikr*. For *dhikr* eliminates heedlessness. Whenever all of our acts are in accordance with the commands and prohibitions of Islam then we will have not been heedless of the Master of those commands and prohibitions and we will be in a state of constant *dhikr*"[820].

814. Imam Rabbani, ibid, I, 346, no: 84.
815. Imam Rabbani, *Ma'arif i Ladunniyya*, p. 71, 25. kısım.
816. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 219, no: 41.
817. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ayniyya*, p. 29.
818. Kishmi, *ibid* p. 197-212; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 182-188.
819. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat,* II, 105, no: 260.
820. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, II, 540, no: 25.

"O my brother! There is no problem as long as one is not lax in two matters: the first one is to follow the path of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), that is, the sharia, and the second is to harbour *ihklas* and *muhabbah* for your shaykh who guided you. As long as these two are present then there can be no harm even if darkness falls all around you. However –Allah forbid - if there is any deficiency in either of these two matters, then there is loss upon loss, even if the person is in a state of constant *dhikr* and *muraqaba*.

For his state of *dhikr* is *istidraj* and his end affair is bad. One should plead to Allah with all his heart and ask for perseverance and uprightness in both of these matters. For these are the essence of the matter and the primary capital in order to attain salvation"[821].

Imam Rabbani also said with regards to advising one to incline towards tasawwuf after learning the sciences of the sharia:

"After attaining the two wings of *itiqad* (belief) and *amal* (deeds) the people of *taqwa* are required to enter the Sufi path, by the grace and favour of Allah. The aim of entering upon this path is not to add anything to these two aims, nor is it to reach anything that is beyond them. Such matters are expectations, which are far from the true purpose, and which lead to slips. The true aim of entering tasawwuf is to gain *yaqin* (certainty) and *itmi'nan* (contentment), which prevent one's beliefs from being shaken by doubts and hesitations...Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an:

'Know that only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace' (Ra'd, 14:28).

Another aim of entering upon tasawwuf is to be able to perform righteous deeds easily and comfortably and to destroy the laziness, stubbornness and resistance which arise from the *nafs'ul ammara* (evil-commanding soul).

The aim of entering upon the path of the Sufis is not to be a witness to certain scenes and visions pertaining to the world of the unseen. All of these are nothing; they are mere play and vain matters. What defects are there in the manifest world that a person would want to leave these and desire to see the world of the unseen by practicing abstention and struggling? Both

821. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*,II, 551, no: 30.

of these worlds are worlds created by Almighty Allah and are proofs of His existence"[822].

"After having adorned our outer aspect appropriately and in accordance with the sharia' we should then turn our efforts towards our inner aspect, in order to prevent our deeds from becoming tainted with heedlessness. To bring our outer world into accordance with the rulings of the sharia is extremely difficult without the support of our inner world.

The duty of the scholars is to give their fatwas (legal rulings). The duties of the *ahl ul Allah* (the people of Allah) however are righteous deeds. Giving importance to one's inner world requires giving importance to one's outer world. One who preoccupies himself with his inner world while neglecting his outer is an unbeliever. The inner states that he may acquire are all *istidraj*. The best measure of demonstrating the soundness of our inner state is ordered according to our outer world. This is the path of uprightness"[823].

In short the inner (*batin*) and the outer (*zahir*) are two elements that complete each other. If one is absent the other is always deficient.

Ahl al Sunnah wa al Jam'ah

Deviant ideas and false movements were widespread during the time of Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him). The creed, worship and behaviour of many of the Muslims had been subverted. Extremely saddened by this, Imam Rabbani struggled with all his might to reteach the path of the *ahl al sunnah wa al Jam'ah*. With the letters that he wrote, he repeatedly encouraged the people to the creed of the *ahl al sunnah* and explained it in great detail, without tiring, being fatigued or giving up. He guided people to learn the details of *fiqh* from the books of *fiqh*.

According to him, when talking to his *murid*, a *murshid* should warn him that he should not give importance to any *kashf* or dreams which are even slightly contrary to the Holy Qur'an or to the hadith. He also advised them to correct their belief and bring it into accordance with the belief of the *ahl*

822. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*,II, 174, no: 266.
823. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*,III, 87-88, no: 87.

al sunnah, to learn the rulings of *fiqh* which are necessary for them to know, and to act upon them[824].

Imam Rabbani would also read various books to his disciples, which were about the religious sciences, and he would persistently remind his representatives in distant lands to read these also. Some of those books are as follows:

From the books of *tafsir* he recommended *Baydawi*, from the books on hadith *Bukhari* and *Mishkat al-Masabih*, from *fiqh, Pazdawi* and *Hidaya*, and from creed *Sharh al-Mawakif* and *Hashiya-i Adudi*, and from tasawwuf *Awarif al-Maarif*[825].

Even though Imam Rabbani was able to memorise the legal rulings and knew them very well and was completely competent in the methods of *fiqh*, whenever a matter arose, he would seek out the trustworthy books, out of his meticulousness, and would always have them by his side. He would act in accordance with the view that was supported by a *fatwa* and in accordance with the preferences of the great scholars of *fiqh*[826].

He wrote in one of his letters:

"This is the advice that I have always given to my friends and that I will continue to do so until the end of my life: After correcting one's belief in the direction of the knowledge that is to be found in the books of theology of the *ahl al sunnah wa al Jam'ah* and after shunning what needs to be shunned and doing what is required in accordance with the rulings of *fiqh* in the matters of the obligatory, the necessary, the *sunnah, mandub,* lawful, forbidden, disliked and doubtful, one should free one's heart from occupying itself with anything other than Allah, Most High..."[827].

824. Imam Rabbani, *Mabda wa Ma'ad*, p. 36, 10th part.
825. Badraddin Sirhindi, *ibid*, II, 89.
826. Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 182.
827. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 235, no: 278.

His sensitivity in following the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)

In all acts, be they big or small, Imam Rabbani would always act in accordance with the Sunnah and advised everyone to do the same. One time he said:

"What share do our struggles have in our success? Whatever we have is by the grace of Allah. But if we must show a reason, then I can say that the reason for all of the favours we have been shown is our devotion to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and our following his blessed path, the master of all the human beings who ever lived and who are yet to come. I attribute all of my success to this. If a person has only been given a little or has not been given something entirely, the sole reason for this is that he has been lax in following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

One time I heedlessly entered the restroom with my right foot (Due to my failure to act upon the Sunnah) **I was deprived of many spiritual states that day**"[828].

Another day Imam Rabbani said to one of his students:

"Bring a few carnations from our garden". That student went and brought six carnations. When Imam Rabbani saw this he said sadly:

"Our students still do not pay attention to the hadith: "*Allah is one (an odd number) and He loves the odd number*" (Bukhari, Dawat, 68). Whereas to take care in this matter is *mustahab*[829]. *What do people think of the mustahab*? The *mustahab* is that which is loved by Almighty Allah. If the entire world and the hereafter is given in return for an act loved by Allah Most High, this amounts to nothing. We abide by the *mustahab* to such a degree that when we wash our face we bring the water to the right side first. It is also *mustahab* to begin a task with the right"[830].

Imam Rabbani wrote in one of his letters:

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828. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 197.
829. In Islamic law *mustahab* refers to an act which is recommended or commendable (Translator's note)
830. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 198; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 180-181.

"Virtue is dependent on following the noble Sunnah of the Prophet while merit is dependent on living according to the sharia that he (peace and blessings be upon him) brought. For instance, to have a nap at noon with the intention of following the Sunnah is much better than many acts of supererogatory worship which are not in accordance with the Sunnah.

Giving a small amount of zakat in order to abide by Allah's command is a much greater merit than spending mountains of gold according to one's desire"[831].

One of his students asked Imam Rabbani for permission to write down his daily prayers, *awrad* and supererogatory acts of worship so as to imitate them. Imam Rabbani said:

"Those deeds which are worthy of following are the deeds of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Learn them from the books of hadith".

His student persisted:

"Master, your deeds are already in accordance with the deeds of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)". Imam Rabbani then said:

"In that case write them down. But be very careful. Only write down those which are in accordance with the sunnah in word and act and do not write down those which are not like that"[832] (Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 427-428).

His worship

Just as Imam Rabbani placed great importance on worship, he also advised his students to worship frequently and he would say:

"Even though the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was the Beloved of Allah and he had reached the highest of stations, he still performed so much worship that his feet would swell (from standing). Those friends of Allah who followed him in the best way also did the same... How-

831. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*,I, 418, no: 114.
832. The one who received this permission, Muhammad Salih Kulabi wrote a book called *Hidaya al Talibin* or *Hadiyyat al Talibin.* See Bayazid State Library. nr. 3823, vr. 1a-17a.

ever much a person obeys Allah and worships Him that is how much he will advance"[833].

Imam Rabbani would also say that the supererogatory acts of worship were also a treasure and he would say about the *tahajjud* prayer in particular:

"Give great importance to your *tahajjud* prayer. Those who wish to take their share from the *Maqam-i Mahmud*, the station of intercession, should never neglect the *tahajjud* prayer". He then read the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

'And stay awake for prayer during part of the night as a supererogatory action for yourself. It may well be that your Lord will raise you to a Praiseworthy Station' (Isra, 17:79)[834].

Imam Rabbani would awake in the middle of the night mostly and sometimes after two thirds of the night had passed, in summer and winter, in times of war and in times of peace. He would recite the prayers that were part of the Sunnah practice at that time and he would take great care to take his ablution in accordance with its required etiquette. He did not like for other people to pour the water when he took his ablution. He would use the water very sparingly and take care to perform his ablution whilst in the direction of the qibla. When washing his feet however he would turn either to the north or to the south. He would use the *siwak* toothbrush after every ablution. He would wash each of his limbs with extreme care and wipe his hands and limbs so that there was no chance of water dripping from them. He would do this as a precaution if he was not sure whether the water used for ablution was clean or not. While taking his ablution he would say the prayers identified in the hadith.

After taking his ablution he would read the prayer for *tahajjud* and begin to perform salat. He would perform his *tahajjud* prayer in a state of complete presence and by reciting long chapters from the Holy Qur'an. In the beginning he would recite chapter Yasin over and over again. But towards the end of his life he would occupy himself with completing an entire reading of the Qur'an. After completing his *tahajjud* prayer he would begin inspecting himself and contemplating in a state of reverence and awe. He would sleep for a brief

833. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 201.
834. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 291.

period before the time for the dawn prayer came and then would wake before the dawn rose and perform the dawn prayer.

He would perform the Sunnah of the dawn prayer at home and then repeat the following glorification: "*Subhanallahi ve bihamdihi subhanallahi al azim*" "سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللهِ العَظِيمِ". After performing the dawn prayer with the congregation he would then spend the morning in the masjid with his friends, completing his *awrad* and then performing four rakats of the '*ishraq* prayer by reciting long chapters and giving salams after two rakats. He would also occupy himself with reading the prayers and glorifications that were required to be read at that time.

He would then go home and ask about his wife and children and tell them what needed to be done. He would then retreat to his room and read the Holy Qur'an. After that he would call his students and ask about them. He would advise them to keep their aims high, to follow the Sunnah, to continue with *dhikr* and *muraqaba*, to conceal their spiritual state and read the books of fiqh.

Many of his talks would pass in silence. He would strongly shun backbiting and seeking out the faults and defects of the Muslims.

Out of their respect for him and due to his stateliness and grandeur, those close to him would never talk about others in his presence. He would take extreme care to conceal his spiritual states. He would perform the *duha* prayer in his room with eight rakats and then would eat with his family. If one of his sons or one of the servants was not present he would put their share aside.

While eating he was more occupied with feeding others and asking about them. Sometimes he would appear to be eating and it would become apparent that he did not need to eat but rather he was merely trying to follow the Sunnah practice in this matter.

After lunch he would take a noon nap (*qaylula*), in accordance with the Sunnah and after the noon prayer he would listen to a *juz* of the Qur'an from a *hafiz*. If there was a lesson to be given to his students he would do so. *He would perform the late afternoon prayer ('asr) in the first moments and he would never abandon the Sunnah of this prayer*. After the '*asr* prayer he would spend the time in silence and in *muraqaba* with his students.

He would perform the evening prayer (*maghrib*) immediately and then do the following silent *dhikr* without rising after performing the fard: *"La ilaha illallah wahdahu la shariqa lah"* "لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ". After performing the Sunnah of the evening prayer he would then perform the *awwabin* prayer.

During the *witr* prayer of '*isha* he would generally recite the chapter *A'la* in the first rakat, then *Kafirun* in the second rakat, and then *Ikhlas* in the third. Sometimes he would perform the *witr* prayer immediately after '*isha* and sometimes after the *tahajjud* prayer.

He would abide by all of the Sunnah practices, the *mandub*, and general etiquette (*adab*) whilst performing salat and after taking his ablution and entering a masjid he would take care to perform two rakats.

He would immediately rest after '*isha* and read the prayers recommended to be read before sleeping. He would make much *dhikr* and invoke blessings upon the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). He would do this in particular on Fridays and on Mondays and its nights. He would also persistently advise those who were in his service and those who kept by his side to continue their practice of frequent *dhikr* and to take care in their *muraqaba*.

Those who listened to him recite from the Holy Qur'an would be able to understand its mysteries and wisdom. When reciting verses related to fear, awe or amazement, he would recite these in the prayer or outside of the prayer in accordance with those emotions. It was as if the meanings of those verses became apparent in his voice and in his blessed face.

Even while he was on a journey, or mounted on his animal he would continually recite from the Holy Qur'an.

Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would take great care in the month of Ramadan, and would complete at least three full readings of the Holy Qur'an from beginning to end. As proscribed by the hadith, he would break his fast immediately after sundown and delay the beginning of his fast, *suhur*, before the predawn. He would go into *itiqaf* (retreat) during the last ten days of Ramadan.

He was very sensitive in the matter of zakat. Whenever a gift arrived from somewhere, he would not wait for a year to pass but would immediately calculate the value of such gifts and pay the zakat. When giving zakat he would first of all give it to those who were striving to guide and reform others, to widows and to his close relatives who were in need.

He would visit the ill and the graves and read the sunnah prayers there. He would accept any invitation given to him and would only refrain from participating in gatherings where sins were being committed.

Imam Rabbani was always in a state of praise and repentance. He would be grateful for even the smallest of bounties. If he was occupied with performing a good deed when there was the opportunity to do something better, he would seek forgiveness for this.

When struck with a calamity he would say: "This is due to our bad state and our deeds"

He would look upon that trial as being like soap to clean away the dirt, and he would show contentment for it and submit to it, saying that it was a means for spiritual growth[835].

Even though he was always performing good deeds and he lived a life of bountiful worship, he still saw himself as defective. He would explain this to his students as follows:

"*'Ujub* (loving yourself and your deeds) burns away good deeds like fire burns wood. '*Ujub* arises when one sees the deeds that one does as being pleasing to one's eye. In order to be freed from this, we need to think of our own hidden faults and defects and see our good deeds as lacking. In fact, a person should be ashamed to have their deeds and good acts heard of by others..."[836]

His praise-worthy character

Beautiful character, tender nature, grace, compassion and kindness towards Allah's creatures, and contentment with whatever Allah has decreed

835. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 217.
836. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 217.

– these and many other virtues had reached their peak in the heart of Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him).

Oppressive rulers did great wrong to him, his family and those close to him. However, never was there any complaint heard coming from him. He was in a constant state of contentment and he also advised those close to him to be patient.

He behaved with great courtesy to people.

Whenever someone came to see him he would stand up out of respect and sit him at the head of the assembly and speak pleasing words in accordance with his state. He would always be the first to greet others. He would not rise for those who were not Muslim – be they high-standing rulers or men of great position and rank. Imam Rabbani was extremely vigilant about other people's rights. Whenever he heard news of the death of someone he would immediately invoke Allah's mercy and recite the verse:

اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَ اِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"…We belong to Allah and to Him we will return (Baqara, 2:156). He would participate in the funeral prayer, pray and recite from Qur'an, sending the reward for it to the soul of the deceased.

He would wear his best clothes on the Friday and the Eid prayers. Whenever he received a new item of clothing he would first allow his servant or a member of his family to wear it.

He usually had approximately 50-60 people, and even 100 people, around him. His assemblies were always filled with scholars (*ulama*), gnostics (*arifun*), guides (*murshidun*), memorisers of the Qur'an (*hafiz*) and high ranking people. He would feed them all from his own kitchen[837].

He was extremely respectful towards the symbols of the religion. One time he saw one of the *hafiz* recite the Qur'an whilst sitting on a cushion that was thinner than the cushion he himself was sitting on. He immediately threw aside his own cushion and sat in a position lower than that of the *hafiz*[838].

837. Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 187-188.
838. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 199.

Imam Rabbani was extremely humble. The style that he used in his letters and works shows his great humility. He would always speak of himself as '*poor*' and as a '*dervish*'[839].

He wrote the following in some of his letters:

"Whenever I do something good I immediately see my faults and censure myself. I accuse my *nafs*, and am not at ease until I consider the angel on my right side to have not written down this good deed. When the book on my right shoulder is completely empty, I believe that the angels who write in it are waiting in vain. Now how can I deserve the pleasure of Almighty Allah while in this state? I know that everyone else in this universe is better than me in many respects. I am the worst of them all"[840].

"...This poor wretch wishes to present himself forth in order to support Islam and struggles in this way, the best that he can. In accordance with the rule "*Whoever takes their position in the ranks of a believer becomes one of them*"[841], it is hoped that this poor and weak slave will be admitted to that group.

My state is like that of the old woman who went to the market with a ball of wool in her hand in order to buy Yusuf with it"[842].

In his letters Imam Rabbani would ask his students to pray for him that he reach Allah as a believer. In one of his letters that he sent to his son, he writes:

"Be kind to children and encourage them to recite the Qur'an. Please those who have a right over us in our name. Help us by praying for the soundness of our faith"[843].

The incapacity of the mind and the need for prophethood

According to Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him), the intelligence and inspiration are incapable of properly comprehending Allah's

839. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 120, no: 261.
840. Imam Rabbani, *ibid,* I, 118, no: 11.
841. Ibn Mubaraq, *Kitabu al Zuhd,* I, 12; Zeyla'i, *Nasbu al Raya,* IV, 346; Ajluni, Kashfu al Khafa, II, 374.
842. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 244, no: 47.
843. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 169, no: 2.

Essence and His attributes, or of reaching certainty of knowledge, and knowing reality completely or attaining knowledge that is beyond the capacity of human perception.

The results and knowledge put forth by the intelligence and by inspiration can never be free of the dangers of doubt, hesitation, error, deficiency or making a mistake.

In that case, correctly comprehending the meaning of life and the universe and knowing Allah, Most High, in accordance with true reality is only possible through the means of the prophets who have been blessed with revelation, which is the source of absolute truth. Just as the capacity and power of understanding of the mind is beyond senses such as seeing and hearing, so the capacity and competence of the prophets is beyond the intelligence. Only the prophets can show us the best way to know Him and obey His divine commands, and how to revere and worship Him.

The philosophers who consider the intelligence to be infinitely powerful in comprehending reality and who judge everything by it have reached a state of ridicule in the matter of knowing Allah. Just as there is no such thing as pure and unbiased intelligence, so too we cannot speak of pure inspiration which is free from the misguidance of the desires of the nafs and outside effects.

In fact, this resembles the imaginary roc bird, present in the imagination but absent in reality. The followers of the *ishraqi* movement, which claimed that reality was born within a person, and certain people who purified only their *nafs* through certain acts of abstention were both subject to the traps of whisperings, doubts and ignorance.

It is impossible for the mind to be uncontaminated, without fault and taint, for the mind is affected by opinions and thoughts, and other factors. It can never be free of weaknesses such as greed, anger and desire; nor from faults such as forgetfulness, absence of mind and error. Many of the rulings that it has reached are tainted by these outer hues and appear confused. This is why the intelligence is not a source that is free of error. On the contrary, it is inadequate.

In contrast, the angel who brought revelation to the prophets is free from all of these faults and is not influenced by any negative factors. This is why

the only unerring and perfect source is that of prophethood. It is also not possible for true purification of the *nafs* to occur without prophethood[844].

Ibn Khaldun, the great Islamic scholar, historian and sociologist, writes on this matter:

"The mind is a sturdy scale. However you cannot measure matters related to Allah and the hereafter, the reality of the prophets, and truths which are beyond the mind with it. This is a vain pursuit and resembles the one who wishes to weigh mountains using the scales of a jeweller thinking that these scales are very sensitive".

We cannot say anything about the robustness of the scale but it has its limits. In the same way the intelligence has its limits in the matter of 'knowing, finding and comprehending' and we cannot take any further steps with it"[845].

Philosophy and other similar methods claim that they can find the truth through their own efforts and without the teachings and guidance of the prophets. However, these truths cannot be learned without these vehicles; these extraordinary men whom Allah bestowed with prophethood. They are the greatest favour of Allah for all of mankind. Human beings can never attain even an atom's amount of that magnificent knowledge given to us in regards to Allah's Essence and His attributes by the prophets, using the philosophical ideas of thousands of years, or by researching, examining, witnessing and cleansing their nafs.

"...And that is how Allah has favoured us and all mankind, but most do not give thanks' (Yusuf, 12:38)[846].

The greatness of the *kalima-i tawheed*

When describing the elevated nature of the statement of tawheed: "La ilaha illallah Muhammadun Rasulullah" "لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ الله" Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

844. See Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, II, 150, no: 266; III, 239-242, no: 23; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 203-204, 227.
845. Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, p. 473.
846. Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 211-212.

"There is nothing more beneficial in quelling the wrath of Allah, Most High, than 'La ilaha illallah' (There is no god but Allah). If these words are able to alleviate the wrath that would otherwise lead one to hellfire, then it will alleviate other wraths even quicker. For other kinds of wrath are lighter than those that lead to hellfire. How can it fail to alleviate it when the servant repeats this phrase, turning his face from everything other than Allah, rejecting all of them; such that Almighty Allah has becomes the qibla of his heart. The reason for the wrath anyway is that the servant inclines to all sorts of directions to which he has become addicted to; since these are eliminated by this statement the wrath will die down as well.

We can give a metaphorical example of this. If a person becomes annoyed and then angry with one of his servants, and then the servant uses his intelligence and leaving aside all other affairs, he turns towards his master with his entire being, feelings of compassion and kindness would naturally arise in the master towards his servant and his anger would die down.

I see that the phrase لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ 'La ilaha illallah' is the key to the ninety nine parts out of one hundred of Allah's mercy that is said to be reserved for the hereafter. I know that there is nothing more effective than this phrase in destroying the darkness of unbelief and clearing up the residue of *shirk*...

The world and everything in it is worth nothing in contrast to the virtue found in this phrase. It is not even like a drop in regard to the entire ocean. However, the value and greatness of this beautiful phrase is in accordance with the spiritual state of the one who speaks it. Its greatness increases in proportion to how elevated the state of the one who utters it...

There is no other wish or desire in this world that is equal to a person retreating into a corner and occupying himself with this blessed *dhikr*. Unfortunately it is not always easy to have one's hopes fulfilled. Sometimes the state of heedlessness prevents this and one is required to mix with the people"[847].

Another time Imam Rabbani explained the meaning of this phrase as follows:

"The purpose of the *dhikr* of «لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ» is to eliminate all false gods, be they outside or inside. Those that are outside, like Lat and Uzza are the false

847. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, II, 591-594, no: 37.

gods of the unbelievers. Those inside are the desires of the *nafs*. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: **'Have you seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his god…' (Jathiyya, 45:23).**

Eliminating the outer gods is sufficient for someone to become a believer. This is enough according to the sharia'. However, in order to eliminate the inner false gods, one needs to undergo purification (*tazkiya*) of one's evil-commanding soul (*nafs al-ammara*). Consequently, this is the aim and result of entering upon the path of the Sufis. One needs to destroy both kinds of false gods in order to attain true belief. The reality of faith is dependent on eliminating these inner gods[848].

Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would constantly advise his children to perform *dhikr*. In one of his letters that he wrote to his son Muhammad Masum he says:

"This is the time for *dhikr*. Put all of the desires of your *nafs* into the word 'La' so that you can uproot them and leave no other desire or aim behind...Be content with His decree!"

When you come to the part of the phrase that is 'Illa Allah' let nothing other than the Being of Allah enter your heart; this Being which is beyond everything known and imagined and which is a complete unknown for us. Houses, palaces, fountains, gardens, books and other things enter a person's mind easily. Do these things not take up your time?"[849].

Another of the pieces of advice that Imam Rabbani gives about being in a constant state of *dhikr* is as follows:

"Let the one who wishes to enter upon this path, correct his belief and bring it into accordance with the opinion of the people of truth, learn the rulings of *fiqh* and act in accordance with them, and then spend the rest of one's time in remembrance of Allah. However, this must be learned from a perfected and perfecting shaykh, for one who is lacking cannot guide another to perfection...

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848. *Maarif-i Ladunniyya*, p. 69, 24. Bölüm.
849. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 169, no: 2.

They must be occupied with *dhikr*, while in a state of ablution or not, while standing and sitting. They should never abandon *dhikr* whilst walking and sitting, while eating or sleeping[850].

“We all know that this world is the world of striving and is not a place of idleness and rest. Put all your efforts into striving. Leave aside idleness and enjoyment. Occupy your tongue with the *dhikr* of “La ilaha illa Allah” to such a degree that no other word exits your mouth unless absolutely necessary. *Dhikr* should be done with the tongue and secretly with the heart...Leave laziness and laxity to your enemy. We should perform righteous deeds, strive for this and strive even more...”[851].

“Know this, that your happiness and salvation, and the happiness and salvation of all of mankind is dependent on *dhikr* of Allah. One should pass all of one’s time to the best one can, in remembering Allah. Even a moment of heedlessness is unacceptable”[852].

Lawful provision

Imam Rabbani says:

“My advice to you is that you are careful about the food that you eat. It is not right for a person to eat whatever they find without considering where it came from, and whether it is halal or haram. The human being has not been left carefree to do whatever he wants. He has a Lord who has commanded certain things and forbidden others. He has made clear the things which please Him and those which do not through the prophets who are a mercy to the worlds. The one who chases after desires which are contrary to His pleasure, and who does as he pleases in His kingdom, will be deprived of eternal happiness...”[853].

“One should perform the five daily prayers in congregation and distinguish between what is halal and what is haram...One should not turn back and look at the fleeting pleasures and the bounties that will fade away...”[854].

850. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 454, no: 84.
851. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ghaybiyya,* 29. kısım.
852. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 569, no: 190.
853. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 44, no: 69.
854. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 467, no: 143.

The importance of *suhbah*

Imam Rabbani *may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently remind people that '*suhbah'* was an extremely important principle of the Naqshibandi path, saying:

"On this path, the principle way of (spiritually) is benefitting oneself and others is *suhbah*. Words and letters do not suffice. (One needs to be present with their heart)"[855].

Imam Rabbani relates the following words of Khwaja Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on them both):

"We were once together with the dervishes. We were discussing the topic which prayers should be made during the time of the Friday prayer since they are guaranteed to be accepted. The following question was asked: "If one is able to locate this time, what should one pray for from Allah, Most High?" Everyone said something. When it was my turn I said:

"At that time one should ask for the *suhbah* of the masters of *jam'iyya'*[856] for this contains all of happiness"[857].

In one of his letters Imam Rabbani spoke of the importance of *suhbah* as follows:

"Opportunities (of the life of this world) are limited. In that case, one should spend this opportunity on the most important tasks. This is to be in the company of the righteous people whose hearts are ever with Allah.

Whatever it may be, do not equate anything with this *suhbah* (companionship with the Masters). Do you not see that the Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) were elevated above all others, with the exception of the prophets, due to their companionship with the Messenger of Allah. Those who were not Companions, be they Uways al Qarani or Umar ibn Abdulaziz, are all below

855. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 396, no: 69.
856. ***Jam'iyya*:** This is a state in which the traveller puts all his efforts and aspirations into turning to Allah and abandons everything other than Him (*masiwa*) and occupies himself solely with Allah. In other words, it is spiritual focus, feeling oneself in the presence of Allah, and being with Him which arise in the heart.
857. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 398, no: 70.

the Companions. Whereas these righteous people had attained the highest of degrees and, with the sole exception of not having been in the company of the Prophet, they had reached the peaks of perfection...

If Uways al Qarani knew the superiority of this companionship, nothing would have prevented him from this and he would not have preferred anything over it"[858].

Making use of one's opportunities

Imam Rabbani perceived the short life of this world to be a great opportunity and advised his students to make use of it in the best way. In one of his letters, he writes:

"My dear children! Opportunity is like a treasure. One should avoid spending even an instant of one's life in vain pursuits. In contrast, one should spend one's entire life in the direction that will lead to Allah, Most High's pleasure. One should perform the five daily prayers in congregation and in compliance with its rules and etiquette.

One should never neglect the *tahajjud* prayer and make use of the opportunity to seek forgiveness during the predawn hours. One should not be deceived by napping and not allow oneself to be caught up by momentary pleasures. We should remember death often and always be anxious about and fearful of the hereafter.

In short we should turn our face away from this world to the hereafter. Our relationship with the world should be only that which is absolutely necessary and we should spend the rest of our time working for our hereafter. In conclusion, we can say the following: we need to free our hearts from being a slave to everything other than Allah, and adorn our outer in accordance with the rulings of the sharia. This is the essence of the matter, and the rest is futile"[859].

In another letter he writes:

858. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 428, no: 120.
859. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, II, 552, no: 31.

"In accordance with the rule "What you cannot achieve completely you should not completely abandon. We should spend our short life following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), to the best of our ability. Being freed from the punishment of the hereafter and finding eternal happiness is dependent on following him"[860].

"The best time to perform good deeds is undoubtedly in one's youth. The intelligent person takes opportunity of this time and does not waste it. For one thing, one does not know whether one will reach old age. Even if one does, it will be difficult to properly perform good deeds due to the weakness and frailty of old age. But in one's youth one can attain the state of giving one's heart to Allah much more easily...The time is the time of taking this opportunity and it is a time of power and rule over one's abilities. In that case, what excuse do we have for leaving aside today's task for tomorrow and being deceived by the thought that "I will do it later". Which excuse can legitimise this neglect?"[861]

"My dear brother! The time is the time for work and not the time for talk. One should devote one's heart to Allah, both inwardly and outwardly. One should not look to any other than Allah without His permission. This is the essence of the matter and the rest is futile"[862.]

"My dear friend! The time that we can spend in good deeds is passing by. Every moment we are losing time from our lives, and the moment of our death, determined by Allah, is approaching. If we do not wake up today, what will be left for us tomorrow is loss and regret.

In these numbered days let us take extreme care in performing good deeds in accordance with the sharia so that we can have some hope of salvation. This is the time for deeds, not the time for rest. Rest is the fruit of performing good deeds. Our deeds are yet in front of us. To rest when it is time to work is to lose one's harvest and dry it up"[863].

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860. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 298, no: 70.
861. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*,, 307, no: 73.
862. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ghaybiyya,* 20. kısım.
863. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 91, no: 89.

Abandoning the *nafs*

Abandoning the ego and the *nafs* is the first condition in spiritual growth. Without doing this one cannot be subject to divine love. Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) expresses this reality as following:

"The heart cannot love two things at the same time. When the heart devotes itself to one thing there is no room left to love anything else. When a person has many desires and their love is divided up between their wealth, their children, leadership, praise, and being superior to others, then what they really love is only one thing, their own selves. Their love for these things is in fact an expression of their love for their *nafs*. A person loves these things not for what they are but for their own *nafs*. When love for their *nafs* is eliminated, then love for these other things also disappears. This is why it has been said: "The veil between a servant and his Lord is not the world, but rather the person's own *nafs*", since the sole aim and desire of a person is his *nafs*. So the necessary result of this is that the veil becomes the person's *nafs*. When a person cannot totally free themselves of their desires, then love for their Lord cannot take its place in their heart"[864].

As **Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him)** said:

"Closeness to Allah is achieved neither by rising up to the sky nor by descending down. Closeness to Allah is only achieved by being freed of the bond to one's own *nafs*"[865].

In order to be freed from love for fleeting creatures and turn towards divine love, Imam Rabbani would give the following advice to his spiritual children:

"Do not be content with anything other than what Allah is content with and do not desire them. Since these will all end when we leave this world, let us abandon them now. Let us not exaggerate them. The friends of Allah abandon them of their own will"[866].

864. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 163-164, no: 24.
865. Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, c. 3, bayt: 4514.
866. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 170, no: 2.

Some of his advice

“One should give the zakat (for both wealth and animals) that one is required to give properly and use this as a means for removing love of wealth from our hearts. We should not put the desires of our *nafs* above all else in the matter of delicious foods and beautiful clothes. We should eat and drink only so much as is necessary to give us strength to perform our worship. When we wear our nice clothes, our intention should be to abide by the command in the following verse:

‘…Wear fine clothing in every mosque…’ (A’raf, 7:31). Our intention should not be to show off to others for our religion has forbidden such things. If we cannot make this our intention then we need to force ourselves and pray to Allah that He make us achieve the reality of this intention”[867].

“When we sit and stand; in short, in all of our acts our goal should be seeking the pleasure of Allah and acting in accordance with the sharia’. The rulings of the sharia’ should be our standard in every state. We should be with Allah, Most High, both inwardly and outwardly. For instance, when we want to go to sleep, which is itself a state of total heedlessness, then we should bear the intention of resting in order to carry out our worship of tomorrow in a better way and with more energy. When we sleep with this intention, then our sleep becomes an act of worship in itself. There is a hadith that states that “the sleep of the scholar is an act of worship”[868 869].

“My child! The essence of the matter is to shun what is beyond the permissible and suffice with only what is necessary. Furthermore, we should use those permissible things with the intention of gaining enough strength and wakefulness of the heart in order to carry out our duty of servanthood to Allah[870].

“We should not spend our time on games and amusement...We should not waste our lives in vain pursuits. Beware of inclining towards music whose pleasure will drag you to a great deception. Music (that stimulates the *nafs*) is like honey mixed with poison.

867. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 298, no: 70.
868. See Dahlawi, *al Firdaws,* nr. 6731.
869. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 224, no: 17
870. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 306, no: 73.

Shun backbiting and gossip. Those who commit such ugly acts face the promise of a weighty threat. It is also extremely important to shun lying and slander. These two disgraceful acts are forbidden in all religions. Those who have committed them are subject to severe warnings.

Concealing the faults of people, covering up their sins, and forgiving people's mistakes are signs of great spiritual ranks"[871].

"Know this; the heart is the neighbour of Almighty Allah. There is nothing closer to His Holy Essence than the heart. In that case, whether someone is a believer or a rebel, avoid harming his heart. This is because a neighbour is protected even if he is a rebel. Please avoid this, for after unbelief (*kufur*) there is no greater sin than harming the heart which leads to offending Allah. The heart is the closest of all created things that can draw nearer to Almighty Allah"[872].

His death

A few months before his death, Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) began to suffer from shortness of breath. During his last days he said to his children:

"My dearest children! I have no bond nor ties left with this world. The eternal world now dominates my thoughts. I see that the day of my journey is near".

He then cut off all relations with the outside world and chose to be alone. He did not leave the house except to perform the five daily prayers and to attend the *jumu'a* prayer. He spent all of his time in *dhikr*, *istighfar*, and the affairs of the *zahir* and the *batin*. This state of his was an embodiment of the verse: **'Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely'** (Muzzammil, 73:8).

He would often weep out of his desire to be reunited with Allah and the following words were constantly heard from him:

871. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 292, no: 34.
872. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, III, 326, no: 45.

"اَللّٰهُمَّ الرَّفِيقَ الأَعْلَى": "O Allah! I wish to join the ranks of the greatest friends". During this time, he passed a few days in good health. The saddened hearts around him were soothed a little. However he said:

"I do not feel the spiritual pleasure I received during my illness, during my days of health".

He gave away much in charity during those days. When a close friend saw all of this he asked:

"Is all of this in order to remove the calamity?" Imam Rabbani replied:

"No, indeed. On the contrary it is due to my enthusiasm for the reunion".

One day his children saw him crying. When they asked him the reason, he replied:

"I am weeping out of happiness at being reunited with Allah".

His sons asked:

"It is not in your habit but lately you have been depriving us of your company. What is the reason for this?"

"Allah, Most High, is more beloved to me than you".

During his last days he continually spoke of the infinite bounties and countless favours of his Lord. He donated all of his clothes to the needy. His temperature then began to rise once more due to the cold weather. Just as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had recovered for a short time during his final illness, the same happened to Imam Rabbani and then he lost his health once more. He thus practised the Sunnah even at his last breath.

Even during those days when he had lost all strength, he did not abandon praying in congregation. He was constantly occupied with prayer and *dhikr* and did not take a break from *muraqaba*. He was not heedless of the commands and principles of the sharia and tariqa for an instant. He continued to pray the *tahajjud* prayer until his final night.

He advised those around him of devotion to the Sunnah, of shunning innovation, and of continuing *dhikr* and *muraqaba* and said:

"The master of this sharia, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Religion is *nasiha* (advice)" and never for an instant did he leave off striving for the good of his community and reforming them. One should follow completely the respected books of religion and act according to them. When it comes to preparing me for my burial make sure you act according to the Sunnah practices. Do not abandon even one!"

To his wife he made the following request:

"My journey to the hereafter will be before you. Take care of your own burial concerns from your own *mihr* (dowry)". One of the most lawful of properties is the *mihr* of a woman.

He would remain in a state of ablution in order to be sure of dying in that state. When he was placed down on his bed he would place his right hand under his right cheek, in accordance with the Sunnah, and busy himself with *dhikr*. When his sons saw him begin to breathe rapidly, they asked:

"How are you?" He replied:

"I am fine". After that he did not speak any word other than the Most Majestic Word - Allah. He passed away a short time later.

The day was the 28th day of the month of Safar in 1034 (10th December, 1624). He was 63 years old.

When his blessed body was brought to be washed the people saw that Imam Rabbani's (may Allah have mercy on him) hands were bound together as if in prayer. They untied his hands however, after washing him they saw that his hands came back together in the same position. After they had shrouded him they saw that his hands were still bound. His children said:

"Since this is what the Imam desires, let us leave them be".

People around him were weeping while the Imam's blessed face was lit up with an indescribable smile. The following beautiful description of a poet described his state:

The day your mother gave birth to you and brought you into this world
You were weeping; while the whole word was smiling
Now live such a life that you will laugh when you die;
While the world around you sheds tears behind you

His washing and shrouding were done in complete accordance with the Sunnah and he was buried in the town of Sirhind in India where he was born[873].

Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) was a true Friend of Allah who did not merely guide the people of his own time, but rather a great multitude of people centuries after him, whose names are known throughout the world. He still continues to guide them to this day, with his works.

Words of wisdom

• Following the prophets raises a person to the highest of ranks; following the *asfiya*, those whose hearts are pure, allows one to reach great ranks. Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) followed the prophet in everything and attained happiness due to his confirming of the prophet and became the head of the *siddiq* (the loyal ones). The cursed Abu Jahl wasted his potential by following his own desires in the cesspool of and became the head of those damned[874]".

• "The knowledge of scholars who indulge in this world may benefit the people but it will not benefit themselves. Even though the strength of the religion is raised upon their shoulders, this will not be taken into account. The strengthening of this religion may occur through the oppressor and the sinner...But if the scholars do not indulge in this world and rid themselves of love of position, leadership, wealth and superiority over others, then they can become the scholars of the hereafter and the heirs of the prophets. Moreover they are the best of creation"[875].

• "This world is the field of the hereafter. Woe to those who do not plant in that field and abandon such fertile land, wasting their seeds of good deeds! Know that abandoning such land and wasting it occurs either by not planting anything there or by planting rotten and decayed seeds (That is, a person faces eternal loss by either wasting their lives away, or spending their lives satisfying the desires of their *nafs*).

873. See Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 300-315; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *ibid,* p. 174-179; Badraddin Sirhindi, *Wisal-i Ahmadi* ([pub. Gulam Mustafa Han), Karachi, 1388/1968, p. 6, 12, 26.
874. Imam Rabbani, *Mabda wa Ma'ad,* 51th part.
875. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 197-199, no: 33.

Everyone knows that the loss of the second kind is greater than that of the first"[876].

• One should not be lax in carrying out the praiseworthy acts. These acts are those that Allah loves and is pleased with. A person should know that there is an act in a corner of the earth that Allah, Most High, loves and is pleased with and he should know it to be a treasure if he is able to carry it out. This situation is like that of a person who purchases precious stones with a few pieces of a broken pot"[877].

• "Know that a verse or chapter that was sent down following a particular event will benefit a person who reads it following a similar event. For instance, reading a verse about purification of the *nafs*, has a great effect in purifying the *nafs* of its evil traits. The others verses are similar in their effects"[878].

• "In my opinion the reason for the superiority of a person is that they lead the way in supporting the religion, and sacrificing their wealth and their lives in teaching its rulings. Since the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was above all else in these matters, he is an unparalleled example for the believers. In the same way, those who lead the way in supporting the religion and teaching it have been examples for those who come after"[879].

(Almighty Allah has taught his servants to read the following prayer):

'Our Lord, give us joy in our wives and children and make us a good example for those who have taqwa…'(Furqan, 25:74)

That is, it is not enough to have *taqwa*. One needs to strive to become a leader in *taqwa*).

• "The purpose of man's creation is to carry out his duty of servanthood to Allah. Whoever has been bestowed with love and ardour at the beginning of the path or in the middle, the aim of this is to cut the connection with all other than Allah. Otherwise the actual aim is not the love and ardour. On the contrary, these are means for attaining the station of servanthood. It is only when the traveller is freed of the slavery and servanthood to all other than

876. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 159, no: 23.
877. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, II, 172, no: 266.
878. Imam Rabbani, *Mukashafat-i Ghaybiyya,* 11. kısım.
879. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 141, no: 99.

Allah that He can be a true servant of Allah. The highest degree of sainthood is the degree of '*ubudiyah,* that is, servanthood. There is no other degree higher than this"[880].

• "The aim in the creation of the human being is to carry out one's worship as has been commanded. The aim in performing this worship is to attain '*yaqin'* (certainty) which is the reality of faith" [881].

• "There is no deception in love. Because the lover is now infatuated with his beloved and can do nothing in opposition to Him and can never incline to those who are in opposition to Him. He can compromise nothing at the expense of his Beloved"[882].

• "May Allah, Most High, save me and you from empty words and deeds done without knowledge for the sake of the Master of Humanity, the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that Allah sent to all races, black and white. Amen!"[883]

880. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 180, no: 30.
881. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 369, no: 97.
882. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 514, no: 165.
883. Imam Rabbani, *ibid*, I, 159, no: 23.

25. Muhammed Mâsûm Sirhindî

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1599-1668]

Muhammed Mâsûm Sirhindî (may Allah have mercy on him) was the third son of Imam Rabbani and was born in the hijri year 1007 (1599).

Imam Rabbani saw in this son, despite his young age, a high capacity and potential to be guided and the ability to guide and took even greater care in training his outward and inner nature. He said to him:

“My son, finish your study of the outward sciences for we have very important and elevated work to do with you”.

Muhammad Masum memorised the Holy Qur’an at a young age. He completed his study of all the outward sciences. Even though he occupied himself with reforming his spiritual state during his training , after he finished his studies he strived with all his might to attain *taqwa*, and made great progress in the path of tasawwuf.

He paid great attention to the instructions of his respected father. He was given the title ‘*Masum’* (innocent) on account of the care he took in shunning all sins.

After the death of his father he took over his duty of guiding others. In the hijri year 1068 (1658) he went to Hajj and benefitted from the spirituality of that blessed land. After residing for a brief period in Madina he returned to India. He related the inspirations and unveilings that were bestowed on him in the Haramayn to his son Muhammad Ubaydullah (may Allah have mercy on them both) who wrote them down in Arabic in a book called *Hasenatu’l-Haramayn.* Muhammad Masum spent his entire life guiding his students.

The scholars gave him the title *Urwat al-Wuthqa*, because he was considered to be a strong and solid rope or handle to be held on to...

The shaykh trained many spiritual masters and disciples, many of whom he sent to faraway lands. Amongst his successors was Shaykh Habibullah Bukhari, considered to be the greatest shaykh of the Khorasan and Maveraunnehir, amongst many others (may Allah have mercy on them). He would provide meals in his lodge for the needy and lonely every day, morning and night.

Alemgir Aurangzeb, the grandson of Akbar Shah, and sultan of the time, affiliated himself with Muhammad Masum and perfected his training under his son Shaykh Sayfuddin (may Allah have mercy on him). Shaykh Sayfuddin raised this prince to be the Muslim ruler of India, and to wipe out all of the innovations and deviant practices put into practice by Akbar Shah.

Muhammad Masum wrote to Sultan Alemgir encouraging him to be upright and to strive in the way of Allah. The Sultan complied with his teacher's instructions with great love and enthusiasm and defended Islam from both inner and outer threats with great resolve and determination.

Due to Khwaja Masum's letters to his students certain of these shaykhs and rulers were extremely knowledgeable, literary and wise. He would explain fine matters of Sufism with great skill. Sometimes he would also explain and expound on his respected father's ideas. His students compiled these precious letters into three volumes and then published them[884].

Prayer and *Dhikr*

Like all true Friends of Allah, Muhammad Masum (may Allah be pleased with him) placed great importance on salat. He preferred starting the initial *takbir* of prayer with the imam to over a thousand acts of unveilings (*kashfh*) or wonder working (*karamat*). He valued the *khushu* (reverence) and peace (*huzur*) of the prayer over spiritual uncoverings[885]. This is why he would write

884. See Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 342-370; Abu al Hasan an Nadwi, *Imam Rabbani,* p. 190-191, 393-394; Cebecioğlu, *The movement of Imam Rabbani and its influence,* p. 176-178; Sulayman Kuku, *Muhammad Ma'sum Faruqi,* Istanbul, ts.

885. Muhammad Ma'sum, *Maktubat*, I, 119, no: 156.

about the virtues of prayer in many of his letters and advised people to perform it as it should be performed. In one of his letters he wrote:

"The prayer is at the head of the acts of worship that bring a person nearer to Almighty Allah. The prayer is a sign of Almighty Allah, the possessor of infinite power. It is not possible to find the nearness one finds in prayer, in anything else. As the Holy Qur'an states: '...**prostrate and draw near'** (Alaq, 96:12).

It is because of the prayer that the veil between Allah, Most High, and His servant is lifted. This is why the prayer has been called 'the *mi'raj* (ascension) of the believer'. A person's *miraj* will be perfected in accordance with the amount of *khushu* he performs his prayer. This is dependent on the degree to which he abides by the Sunnah when performing it...

The prayer does not merely consist of the form that we know. It has a reality in the world of the unseen, which is above all other realities..."[886].

Muhammad Masum would encourage his disciples to be in a state of constant *dhikr* and would say:

"When the servant remembers Allah, Allah remembers His servant, as is stated in the verse: **'Remember Me – I will remember you'** (Baqara, 2:152). As long as the servant continues to remember Allah, Allah continues to remember Him. Is there any greater happiness than our True Master and Protector constantly remembering us and thus being subjected to divine prosperity?"[887].

Invitation to the truth and to good

Muhammad Masum said:

"...The path of our shaykhs of this Naqshibandiyya way is to adhere to the Sunnah and shun innovation. This is patently obvious from the books and letters they wrote. In addition, this path of truth consists of advising to goodness, cautioning against evil, loving for the sake of Allah and despising for the sake of Allah, and fighting in the way of Allah, all of which are the sunnah practices of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and

886. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 167, no: 230.
887. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 84, no: 145.

are in fact the requirements and obligatory acts of the religion that he brought. In that case, to abandon *amr bi'l ma'ruf* is to deviate from the right path..."

The masters of tasawwuf penned countless works in order to openly explain those things that would lead to the salvation and guidance of human beings and those that would lead to their destruction and ruin. One of the Friends of Allah gave the following advice to his student:

"The path of love is very fine and sensitive and requires sacrifice. This is why you should give advice to everyone and also fear for yourself (the tricks of the *nafs* and especially of showing conceit)"...[888]

Knowledge of Allah (*Marifatullah*)

What is requested of the human being in this world is worship and servanthood. The final aim is for the heart to pass through the stages and finally attain *marifatullah*, that is, to know Almighty Allah. The servant should be striving for this. The real miracle is for the servant to advance in the direction of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and attain *marifatullah*. Muhammad Masum says:

"It is known that the aim in the creation of the human being is to attain *marifatullah*...If a believer does not progress on this path then he will have lost a great treasure. He will not have achieved the purpose of his creation, and failed to have carried out the thing asked of him and occupied himself with vain pursuits. He will have given importance to the desires of his *nafs*, and wasted the precious capital of his life on useless matters. He will have incapacitated the potential that was bestowed on him to achieve this aim. Despite having been invited to eternal happiness in this fleeting world, he turned his attention elsewhere. When tomorrow that person leaves this world and arrives in the hereafter, how will he face Almighty Allah? What excuse will he find for such heedlessness and neglect? The burning regret that such people will feel is described in the following verse:

'They will shout out in it, 'Our Lord! Take us out! We will act rightly, differently from the way we used to act!' Did We not let you live long enough for anyone who was going to pay heed, to pay heed? And did not

888. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 29-30, no: 29.

the warner come to you? Taste it then! There is no help for the wrongdoers’ (Fatir, 35:37)**.**

We should know this well that union with Allah is much more pleasurable than the bounties of the hereafter. Furthermore, to be distant from and deprived of His Divine Beauty is the greatest loss (There are two Paradises, the first of which is the realm of Paradise, which is the reward for servanthood and the second is the Paradise of seeing the Beauty of Allah (*Jamalullah*).

This world is the examination centre for the hereafter. The human being is sent here only once (The examination continues until the last breath and then the eternal life begins). Our Lord has said:

‘Those who are blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter and even further off the Path’ (Isra, 17:72)

According to a narration, Imam Qushayri once saw his teacher Abu Ali Daqqaq in his dream after he had passed away. His teacher was extremely sad and was weeping. Imam Qushayri asked him:

“Master, why are you sad or is that you wish to return to the world?”

Abu Ali Daqqaq replied:

“Yes I wish to return to the world and knock on each door one by one and warn them:

“O people! Beware of remaining heedless of your generous Lord. Are you aware of how infinite a power you are neglecting?” I wish to warn them so that they know where it is that the human being came from and where he is heading.

In that case, what is absolutely necessary for us who are heedless is to spend our precious lives in understanding these elevated and wonderful meanings.

Let us listen carefully to the explanation of this mystery and the ways of knowing Allah from the travellers and righteous who were seekers of these methods. Let us run to wherever we can benefit. Even though we may not be able to attain this precious treasure in its entirety, at least let us not deprive ourselves of the thought of trying...

What is needed for the traveller to the Truth is for him to continue in his efforts without rest, and always strive and be anxious to advance and to feel responsible at every instant... If this occurs, then we would hope that the ocean of Divine grace and favour will flow over him and the true lover will be saved from its waves and a window of *marifatullah* will open into his heart and he will begin to know Allah...

My request from my precious friends is this: do not deprive this poor brother of yours of your prayers and ask Allah that I attain knowledge of Allah"[889]

Muhammad Masum says:

"*Marifah* is better than working miracles and experiencing unveilings. *Marifah* is to discover the divine mysteries; whereas the extraordinary states and *karamat* are the discovery of the states of created beings. In that case the difference between *marifah* and *karamat* is like the difference between the Creator and the creation. True marifah helps one in perfecting one's faith and spiritually progressing. However, *karamat* are not like that and the perfection of the human being is not dependent on them...The person who seeks *kashf* and *karamat* seeks out petty things and is a slave to them. He is deprived of closeness to Allah and knowing him in his heart...If a person begins to see himself above other people on account of the *karamat* that he displays, he will be dragged to pride and conceit and will be deprived of the benefits of worship and the spiritual path and will have closed the door of *marifah* onto him"[890].

A person's youth is the best time to achieve this lofty goal. In regards to this matter the master said:

"My child! The most precious time of your life is your youth. These days of strength and soundness of limbs will pass and the time of old age and weakness will arrive. It is a shame that people delay their attaining *marifatullah* to their old age, which may not even arrive. They waste away their most honourable time on their desires and whims, which are the most disgraceful of things. Do not forget: "**Those who say 'I will do it tomorrow' are ruined"**[891]**.**

889. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 87, no: 102.
890. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 52, no: 50.
891. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 63, no: 65.

Love of Allah (*Muhabbetullah*)

In one of his letters Muhammed Masum (may Allah have mercy on him) writes:

"The letter that you sent via our precious brother Muhammad Hanif arrived. We were very happy when we read it. When we sensed your effort, passion and zeal in reaching Allah, our joy increased. How great a bounty it is when Allah, Most High, establishes His love in the heart of His servant and causes him to burn due to separation from his Lord .., especially in this time of dissension and darkness. We should know the value of this bounty and be grateful for it and be filled with peace and joy at this divine favour. We should keep our aspirations high and know that it is a must to strive to increase this state by asking: "Is there no more?"

One should strive until one reaches the final stage of Divine Love and until one completely surpasses all things other than Allah. We need to devote ourselves to the True Beloved and to nothing other than Him and to stop pursuing idle matters...

O my happy and fortunate brother! If you wish to walk in the path of the beloved servants of Allah then you must abide by the conditions and etiquette of this path. You must shun all innovation (*bid'a*) for this shunning is the foundation of Sufism. Let your deeds, your acts, your words and your character be in harmony with the rulings given by the pious scholars. Take the character of the righteous to be your emblem and harbour love for the needy. Be moderate in your sleep, your eating and your speech. Try to stay awake during the pre-dawn to the best of your ability. Know that prayer, seeking forgiveness and weeping (for Allah) at that time is a treasure. Be desirous to be with the righteous and converse with them and never abandon this. You would have heard the saying "A person is on the religion of his friends". Know well that it is not fit for those who desire the afterlife and everlasting bliss to indulge in the pleasures of this world..."[892].

Muhammad Masum advised freeing oneself from fleeting loves and focusing on divine love as follows:

892. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 14-15, no: 14.

“The purpose in the *sayr u suluq*, in abstention, in struggle and in hardships, is to be freed of the love of things other than Allah. All of these efforts are to bring forth one’s servanthood, one’s weakness and one’s pitifulness in the face of Allah, and to realise that one is nothing compared to Him”[893].

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

“Whoever knows himself knows his Lord” (‘Ajluni, *Kashf al Khafa,* II, 361).

Yahya bin Muadh writes about the virtue of attaining Allah’s love as follows:

“The people will love you to the degree that you love Allah. The people will fear you to the degree that you fear Allah. The people will concern themselves with you to the degree that you are concerned with Allah, Most High”.

If a person is happy at obeying the commands of Allah, then all of creation wishes to serve him with great enthusiasm and joy. If a person remembers Allah and contemplates Him, then everything will look at him and find peace and joy. In that case, turn yourself completely to Allah, Most High, and do not turn to any other. Do not let your *nafs* occupy you. Do not trust in anything other than the grace of Allah”[894].

Seeing your own faults

In order for a believer to be humble and to carry out his deeds in an acceptable fashion, he needs to perceive his own weakness and see his own faults. The sign of servanthood is weakness and deficiency. Muhammad Masum gives the following advice on this matter:

“Be upon worship and obedience and also seek forgiveness for the deficiency in your worship. Do not consider your deeds to be enough for Allah. One of our great men said: “Perform righteous deeds and seek forgiveness. This is the path of servanthood[895].

893. Muhammad Ma‘sum, *ibid*, I, 163, no: 230.
894. Muhammad Ma‘sum, *ibid*, II, 82, no: 110.
895. Muhammad Ma‘sum, *ibid*, I, 83, no: 92.

"When a person considers himself imperfect, this modesty increases the value of his deeds and makes it easier for them to be accepted"[896].

The hardships that a person encounters are generally a consequence of their own faults. The intelligent person should immediately check himself when he encounters something undesirable and consider whether there is anything lacking in his servanthood to Allah. If he finds a fault, he should strive to correct it immediately.

One time Muhammad Masum gave the following advice:

"The reason we are oppressed by our rulers is our own wrongdoing. It has been said that "your deeds are your rulers". In that case reform yourself and enter the path of scrupulousness (*wara*') and *taqwa*[897].

His death

When Muhammad Masum (may Allah have mercy on him) realised that his death was near, he increased his preparation for his journey to the hereafter. He withdrew completely from all worldly affairs. He continued to pray to Allah to accept him amongst the most elevated of friends. He divided up his precious library amongst his children, his loved ones and his sincere and worthy students, by drawing lots.

One day, while he was giving a lesson on hadith to his students, he felt an intense pain in his foot. This pain gradually moved to his knees and then to his entire body. He tried not to let those around him know of his discomfort and when the pain got too much, he sought consolation in recitation of the Holy Qur'an. He took care to perform his prayers in congregation. In his letters of that time he generally wrote the following:

"This poor Muhammad Masum is departing the world. Help him to depart with faith at his last breath, by praying for him".

As he passed away his last words were "*As salamu alaykum (Peace be upon you)*".

896. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 103, no: 225.
897. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 26, no: 34.

The date was the 9th of Rabi al awwal 1079 (1668 AD). He was buried in Sirhind. Sultan Alemgir had a high domed shrine built over his grave.

Words of Wisdom

• "Enthusiasm or zeal is a great bounty. The essence of this matter is enthusiasm and love. Spiritual growth and drawing nearer to Allah are dependent on them"[898].

• "Almighty Allah did not create you so that you could eat and drink, sleep and live a life of pleasure. The true land of living and benefitting from bounties is the hereafter. You were created for obedience, servanthood and to know yourself"[899].

• "Almighty Allah, who is independent of all the worlds, invited us to Himself, and guided us to divine union, and through the greatness of His grace, he opened up this path for His servants. Woe to us if we remain distant and veiled from the Beauty of Allah while we have been sent the invitation and given a guide and if we are unable to free ourselves of the bond of our *nafs* and whims"[900].

• "The pleasure of submitting to the commands of our True Master and obeying Him, is much greater than the pleasure that comes from the unlawful. When our Lord, who bestowed upon us all bounties, is pleased with a person and his deeds, this is such a great bounty that no other bounty can come close to it. Likewise, there is no pain equal to the pain of remaining distant from the pleasure of our Lord"[901].

• "A person who wishes to satisfy the desires of their *nafs* has abandoned seeking the pleasure of Almighty Allah"[902].

• "Attar-i Shibli (may Allah have mercy on him) wept for forty years and was unable to raise his head and look up at the heavens. When they asked him why he was weeping, he replied:

898. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 66, no: 119.
899. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 32, no: 45.
900. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 103, no: 191.
901. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 152, no: 211.
902. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, III, 45, no: 67.

"I weep out of my fear of the grave and the terror of the Day of Judgment".

When they asked him why he could not look up at the heavens, he replied:

"I am ashamed of my sins. I have committed many sins and kept laughing and guffawing in the assemblies. I am now so ashamed that I cannot look up"[903].

• "Life is but a few days but eternal wealth is gained with it. In that case, my dear brothers, do not waste your lives in vain"[904].

• "I have never seen an uncouth and crude person lacking in manners and deprived of etiquette and courtesy succeeding in reaching Allah"[905].

• "Freeing oneself of the harm of fleeting bounties and pleasures is dependent on using them in the way of Allah's commands and prohibitions. If one does not submit to the divine rulings, these pleasures will become harmful and they will be disregarded, and their fruits will be divine wrath and punishment. True salvation is to stay as far away as one can from these fleeting pleasures"[906].

• "The human being is not content with a small amount of wealth. Whereas the less the wealth, the less time it will take and the easier it will be to account for it"[907].

• "Allah, Most High, made it so that the foundation of salvation in the hereafter be dependent on the sharia, which is supported by revelation. He made it so that drawing nearer to him is dependent on following the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The following verse illustrates this:

'Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me…' (Al'i Imran, 3:31)908.

• "One should strive to perform all righteous deeds and do good works. No path will be opened by gossip"[909].

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903. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 19, no: 18.
904. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 46, no: 38.
905. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*,, I, 137, no: 182.
906. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*,, I, 51, no: 49.
907. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 48, no: 42.
908. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 58, no: 57.
909. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 85, no: 99.

• "The person who strives to attain elevated spiritual states and ecstasy (*wajd*) has become a slave to the *masiwa*"[910].

• "Until they reach the station of the *nafs al mutmainna* (the contented soul) a person will only experience the outer of Islam. For instance, when they pray or fast, they will only have performed the outer aspect and form of these acts. When they reach the station of the *nafs al mutmainna*, however, they will be elevated to the reality of this religion, and begin to experience the true nature of faith, prayer, fasting, hajj, and zakat as well as the other commands"[911].

• "Ahmad Muqri said: "Speak little and leave off sleeping and laughing too much, for these kill the heart"[912].

• "The life of this world consists of feelings and movement. The life in the grave, however, consists only of feelings, there is no action. Allah, Most High, is the Absolutely Wise One and so has bestowed suitable actions everywhere. Feeling is absolutely necessary in the grave for one needs feelings to feel pain and pleasure. However, there is no need for movement but this world and the hereafter are not like this; they are both necessary"[913].

• "Matters concerning the realm of the spirits and the intermediate realm are very subtle. One should not dare to speak about these matters based on personal opinion and guessing. One should believe in what has been brought through revelation and leave the details to the knowledge of Allah. We believe that there are bounties and there is punishment in the grave but we do not go into detail since this is not asked of us anyway"[914].

910. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 103, no: 128.
911. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 141, no: 186.
912. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, II, 81, no: 110.
913. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 44, no: 34.
914. Muhammad Ma'sum, *ibid*, I, 136, no: 182.

26. Muhammad Sayfuddin Sirhind

(May Allah have mercy on him)[1639-1684]

Muhammad Sayfuddin (may Allah have mercy on him) was the fifth son of Muhammad Masum and was born in Sirhind in the hijri year 1049 (1639 AD).

When he reached the age of study, he first of all memorised the Qur'an. He then studied the rational (*aqli*) and transmitted or traditional (*naqli*) sciences with his uncle. He made great progress in a short amount of time. He attained knowledge of the heart by serving his honourable father, one of the greatest scholars of the time, and by listening to him. He reached very elevated ranks and his prosperity and blessings spread throughout the world.

His guiding of the Sultan

The sultans, commanders, and statesmen of that time benefitted from his knowledge and his virtue and paid him great respect.

Shaykh Sayfuddin placed great importance on *amr bi'l ma'ruf* and struggled against innovation. Under the order of his respected father, when he arrived in Delhi to spiritually guide Sultan Alamgir Aurangzeb (who ruled from 1658 to 1707) he saw some pictures at the gate of the city. There were two wild elephants and a brave wrestler trying to control them. Shaykh Sayfuddin did not enter the city until these pictures, which were a symbol of false beliefs were torn down and removed.

As a result of his many talks with the sultan he had many of the innovations eradicated that had become widespread in the land. Islam became so strong in India that it had never experienced such a period before. The people of innovation were disgraced and were unable to find acceptance anywhere.

One day the Sultan invited him to his private garden. There was a decorated pond in the middle and surrounding the pool were shapes in the form of fish whose eyes were made of ruby and diamond. When the shaykh arrived, he asked the Sultan to first of all remove those statues. After these were removed he came and sat there.

The Sultan, who later became one of the friends of Allah, was pleased with these acts and thanked Allah saying:

“O Allah! I praise you with endless praise that You have created such saintly servants in my time”.

Shaykh Sayfuddin would relate the spiritual progress and stations passed by the Sultan to his father and act in accordance with the instructions given by him[915]. He would hold long talks and meetings with the Sultan and read and explain some of his father’s letters, which consisted of some difficult expressions. The sultan would listen to him with great sincerity.

Shaykh Sayfuddin stayed by the side of the Sultan in order to strive for the revival of the Sunnah and the application of the principles of Islam. At times when he had to be distant from him, he wrote him letters. A total of 18 letters that he wrote to him are compiled in the work entitled *Maktubat-i Sayfiyya*[916].

Upon the inculcation of his master, the Sultan brought life to his nights by spending them in worship and spent his life striving in the way of Allah. In fact, despite his advanced age he even memorised the Holy Qur’an.

Thus the secret to Sultan Alamgir being able to rule his land for 50 years with justice was that he obeyed his blessed teacher with great sincerity and strove in the way of Allah.

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915. For example, see Muhammad Ma‘sum, *Maktubat*, III, 115, no: 220.
916. Letters No: 20, 22, 23, 26, 35, 39, 56, 57, 59, 60, 67, 72, 74, 76, 80, 161, 164 ve 165.

In order to be able to mete out justice as required, the Sultan ordered that the strong rulings and *fatwas* found in the books of fiqh be reordered and reclassified as they were quite scattered. With this aim in mind he formed a committee of 40 people. Through the combined efforts of these scholars the work *Fatawa al Hindiyya (Alamgiriyya*) was penned between the years 1664-1672.

The most often preferred opinions based on sound narrations were used to give fatwas. The Sultan personally oversaw the scholarly research and spent a great amount of money in having it prepared. After it was completed, he commanded that it be applied in the official places of the government.

Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyya formed the basis of the Islamic justice and ruling system of the Indian-Turkic states for centuries. It became one of the foundational texts that were applied to matters related to Islamic justice and lawmaking found throughout most of the Islamic world.

His virtues

Shaykh Sayfuddin (may Allah have mercy on him) was always surrounded by a great crowd of people. This was so much so that one day, when the Sultan's son, Muhammad Azam Shah, wanted to enter his presence he had great difficulty passing through the crowds at the door. His turban fell off his head and his robe got stuck. He finally managed to get through with great difficulty and was then subject to his attention and blessings. When he returned to his father he told him what had happened. The Sultan was very pleased and said:

"Alhamdulillah that in my land there is a great saint whom even the sultans and their sons have trouble reaching".

Shaykh Sayfuddin paid great respect to his brothers and made extra effort to abide by their rights. One day this very same prince invited him to the palace. One of the shaykh's older brothers was with him. When the meal arrived the sultan's son came and brought water in an urn which he used to pour water over Shaykh Sayfuddin in order for him to wash his hands. The Shaykh took the urn from him and used it to pour water over his brother's hands. Then

he gave the urn back to the prince and they washed their own hands. This undoubtedly shows the great humility that he possessed.

Shaykh Sayfuddin was a true friend of Allah who possessed great spiritual awe and majesty. Sultans and their amirs would stand up for him in his assemblies and would be embarrassed to sit before he did.

He was at the peak of the outer and inner sciences. He became famous for his abstention, his taqwa and his compliance with the Sunnah of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) so that he received the title: *"Muhyi al Sunnah*", that is 'the reviver of the Sunnah'.

Many unbelievers, sinners and deviants were honoured to enter his blessed presence and were blessed with guidance, returning having repented and seeking forgiveness.

He would strongly caution against spending time with those who were in love with the world and who desired what was in it. During his assemblies, he would be occupied with *dhikr*, *tafakkur* and *muraqaba*.

Every day countless numbers of people would enter his presence in order to benefit from him. He would serve each of them a meal. Even though they were in great bounty, his students would be subject to elevated stations and wonder workings. To those who were surprised by this he would say:

"A life of intense *riyadah*, *mujahada*, and *zuhd* allows a person to work miracles. Our aim, however, is not to be people of wonder working but rather to continue in our *dhikr*, to turn to Allah, to devote ourselves to the Sunnah and to obtain even greater prosperity and spirituality.

Shaykh Sayfuddin (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 1096 at the age of 47. His tomb is in Sirhind[917].

Words of wisdom

• "If Allah Most High did not inflict pain and suffering on his servants then people would remain heedless of worshipping and remembering Him. In order for the human being to attain the happiness of both worlds and Allah's

917. Kishmi, *Barakat*, p. 477-479; Sulayman Kuku, *Muhammad Ma'sum Faruqi, p*. 169-172; Nadwi, *Imam Rabbani,* p. 398-400; Hani, *Hadaiq*, p. 593-595.

mercy, he should not abandon worship, obedience and *dhikr*. Everyone is in need of Allah's mercy. When one reflects on this well, one realises that our pain and our struggles are in fact a bounty and a rope that draws us to Him".

• "This lowly world is like an old enemy. It never lets anyone be free, be they friend or foe, and never takes pity on anyone. It deceives every person and finally abandons them forever, showing its disloyalty. The intelligent person is the one who serves Allah in this short life and follows the path of eternal happiness promised by Allah".

The ball of spiritual happiness has been thrown up

But no one has ventured forth to catch it … where are the seekers?

27. Sayyid Nur Muhammad Badayuni

(May Allah have mercy on him)[v.1722]

Since he was from the lineage of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) he was known as Sayyid. He was from the city of Badayun in India.

Sayyid Nur Muhammad took his knowledge and blessings from the great guide Muhammad Sayfuddin, the grandson of Imam Rabbani In addition, he also studied under the great scholar Hafiz Muhammad Muhsin (may Allah have mercy on them all).. He had advanced to such a degree in his knowledge, that he became an unparalleled scholar and guide in *sarf* (Arabic grammar) *nahw* (syntax), logic, *ma'ani*, *tafsir* (Quranic commentary), hadith, and tasawwuf. People would rush to his assemblies in order to benefit from his knowledge.

Sayyid Nur would take extreme care in matters of religion. He was extremely careful to stay away from unlawful and doubtful things. He would eat very little and take extra precautions to determine that what he ate was lawful.

He would always have by his side books that described the life and elevated character of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and was constantly striving to follow his Sunnah in every act.

One day when he went to the bathroom, he accidently entered with his right foot. Due to the sorrow that resulted he was struck with a spiritual constriction for three days.

He would avoid sitting with people who indulged in the world. His back had become bent from worshipping so much.

His student Mazhar Jan-e Janan (may Allah have mercy on him) would weep when speaking about him saying:

"You were unfortunate enough not to have seen Sayyid Nur. If you had seen him, your faith would have been renewed and you would have said: "How great is the power of Allah, Most High, that He created such a blessed man!"

His state would not change whether he was praised or criticised by the heedless. He was always in a state of submission to and contentment with Almighty Allah.

Sayyid Nur was a man of great piety. This is why he would take great care in his words and in his actions. His student Jan-e Janan narrates:

"One day, under orders by my teacher, I was grounding some sesame root in order to make medicine. My teacher asked:

"Has it become fine enough?"

"Yes" I replied. My teacher took it in his blessed hand and said: "It is not fine enough" and then he cautioned me as follows:

"One should never speak about a matter without first investigating it otherwise their words will be a lie"[918].

Sayyid Nur (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 1135 (1722AD) in Delhi. His tomb is located there[919].

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918. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makamat-i Mazhariyya,* p. 25.
919. Gulam Server Lahuri, *Hazinat al Asfiya,* Kanpur 1312/1894, I, 659-660; Abdulhayy al Hasani, *al-I'lam/Nuzhat al Khawatir,* Leknev 1413, VI, 406-407.

Words of wisdom

• “There is no limit to spiritual perfection. We should spend our limited and finite lives seeking it”[920].

• “The person who behaves with *taqwa* is certain to advance in the degrees of sainthood”.

920. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makamat-i Mazhariyya,* p. 27.

28. Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Janaan

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1701-1781]

Shamsuddin Habibullah Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Janaan (may Allah have mercy on him) was a *sayyid*. He was born in the hijri year 1113 (1701 AD).

His father gave great importance to his education and training, even from a very young age. From a young age he inculcated in him the value of one's time and to use it wisely in order not to waste it. He ensured that he gained various skills, abilities and talents.

Jan-e Janaan studied under the various Islamic scholars of that time and after receiving his *ijaza*, he taught various subjects to other students. In addition, he would write poems of tasawwuf under the pen-name 'Mazhar'. He has a collection of poems in Persian and Urdu[921].

He visited many great men of his time and sat with them and was given their attention. At a young age he heard of the perfection of Sayyid Nur Muhammad and he visited him and saw how meticulous he was in following the Sunnah, and how, as a true Friend of Allah, he had taken on the attributes of the Divine. He continued his spiritual training under him (may Allah have mercy on them both). When the time came, his teacher gave him his *ijaza* and he also presented him with his coat for the blessings it contained[922].

After leaving his teacher, he continued in the service of guiding the people, struggling selflessly.

921. Kanpur 1271/1855.
922. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makamat-i Mazhariyya,* p. 26, İstanbul 2002.

The great scholar, Shah Waliyyullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him), said about him:

"In these times, there is none like Mirza Jan-e Janaan, in any place, in any city. Whoever wishes to journey in the degrees of tasawuuf should enter his presence".

And so the students of Shah Waliyyullah Dahlawi, under the order of their teacher, went and affiliated themselves with Jan-e Janaan[923].

Those who sought togetherness with Allah would come from everywhere and rush to be in his presence. The scholars and the righteous desiring Divine prosperity would gather at his lodge.

Jan-e Janaan trained many successors and students. He also guided them with his letters. In these letters, he would answer any questions asked of him in regards to *kalam*, *fiqh* and tasawwuf[924].

Jan-e Janaan would shun extremes and also take the moderate way. He would take care that his every act was in accordance with the Sunnah of the prophet. In a display of great humility he would say:

"Let those who see any act of ours which is not in accordance with the rules of Islam warn us immediately"[925].

He would also caution his students as follows:

"The believer should strive to carry out the responsibilities of his servanthood. He should be ready for death at every instant. When the believer eradicates all desires of his nafs from his heart, death appears to him as a divine gift. For this state is a means for him to be reunited with Almighty Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him)"[926].

Close to his death, Jan-e Janaan (may Allah have mercy on him) would increase his worship and say:

923. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 36.
924. The 89th letter written in Persian as a means for guiding others was published under the name of *Kalimat-i Tayyibat* (Delhi 1309/1891). In the work by his student Abdullah Dahlawi called *Makamat-i Mazhariyya,* can be found 24 of his letters. All of his letters were translated into Urdu int the book *Mirza Jan-e Janaan ki Hudud* (pub. Khaliq Anjum, Delhi 1962).
925. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. p. 43.
926. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 43.

"Through his grace and favour, Allah Most High bestowed on this wretch all of his desires. Now I have no desire left, other than to become a martyr. Most of my ancestors were martyrs …"

One night in the hijri year 1195 (1781 AD) in the month of Muharram, some brigands knocked on his door. Three men entered and one of them attacked Jan-e Janaan and murdered him. They immediately called a physician. The rulers captured the brigands and tried to take revenge, but the shaykh, in a unique display of great virtue said:

"If Almighty Allah has willed me to recover, then this wound will heal. If that man is captured, then tell him that I have forgiven him and you too forgive him".

He (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away three days later[927].

Words of wisdom

• "Every act has its own characteristics. *Salat* (the ritual prayer) has gathered all of these characteristics within it. It includes the lights of recitation of the Holy Qur'an, praising Allah, invocation of blessings upon the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and seeking forgiveness. If the *salat* is performed in the manner required, the most correct and sound states resembling the Age of Bliss will arise from it"[928].

• "If the holy month of Ramadan is passed in a state of wakefulness and *dhikr*, then this beautiful state will continue for the rest of the year. If there is any fault or laxity in this month, then traces of this will be seen throughout the year"[929].

• "Friendship with sinners darkens the light of the heart"[930].

• "Harbouring love for the accepted and beloved servants of Allah is the strongest means for drawing nearer to Him"[931].

927. Abdullah Dehlevî, *a.g.e,* s. 82-83.
928. Abdullah Dehlevî, *a.g.e,* s. 73.
929. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 73-74.
930. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 24.
931. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 43.

• “It is required to love the imams of the *ahl al bayt* and to show respect and reverence for the blessed Companions. This is the straight path. In the hereafter the *sirat al mustaqim* (the straight path) will manifest as a bridge. Those who did not stray from the straight path in this world will pass over that Bridge without straying or falling”[932].

• “Those on this path fear the attribute of conceit within themselves, even if they perform many good deeds. They see themselves as lacking and continually seek forgiveness. **They consider a minor sin from themselves to be major and consider a small bounty from Allah to be something great and they constantly embrace gratitude and contentment with Allah**”[933].

• “One should spend one’s time performing the outer deeds until they become well established. The light of righteous deeds is that the heart is ordered and in a constant state of *dhikr* and leads to peace and foresight”[934].

• “The science of hadith consists of the subtleties of *tafsir*, *fiqh* and tasawwuf. The light of faith is increased through the blessings of this science. As a result one is able to perform righteous deeds and breed good character”[935].

• “The solving of one’s problems sometimes appears by seeing the face of one’s guide in one’s dream. Sometimes that great person is aware of this and sometimes not. One time someone came to this wretched man and asked:

“How did you get back here from the Ka’bah?” I replied:

“I did not go to the Ka’bah”.

“I saw you in Mecca. You read to me some lines, which I cannot remember now, that guided me”, he said.

Such events should not be a cause for arrogance or pride, for we and you are only instruments in the hands of Allah. In reality the true agent of all affairs is Allah, Most High”[936].

932. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p.. 45.
933. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 49.
934. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 50.
935. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 52.
936. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 46.

29. Abdullah Dahlawi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1743 - 1824]

Also known as Ghulam Ali, Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the hijri year 1156 (1743 AD) in the province of Punjab. His lineage goes back to the caliph Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

His father, Shah Abdulatif Efendi was an ascetic and a *mujahid*. He took great care in making sure that his provision was lawful. In fact, he is known to have sufficed many times with only fruit grown in the fields.

Abdullah Dahlawi went to Delhi at a young age and attended the assemblies of the righteous there. He memorised the Holy Qur'an and studied the tafsir, hadith and fiqh sciences. He took his *ijaza* as a narrator of hadith. Whilst still young he went to the lodge of Mazhar Jan-e Janaan who said to him:

"My son, our path is one of ordeal and suffering. Go somewhere else if you want spiritual pleasure and fervour".

"I desire your path" said Abdullah Dahlawi.

"In that case may Allah bless you" and he accepted him as his student.

For a long time Abdullah Dahlawi was in dire economic straits. There were days where he used an old straw mat as a bed and a brick for a pillow. However, none of this harmed his submission and his reliance upon Allah. He spent years of spiritual training at his teacher's side. Finally his teacher gave him the *ijaza* to guide others.

His life of guidance

Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) began to guide others after the death of his master. Aside from *dhikr* and *muraqaba,* he also taught fiqh, hadith, tafsir and tasawwuf at the Sufi lodge. He would serve those who came to visit, but kept his meetings brief and would ask to be free once he had helped them with their problem. He would advise them to spend their time on important matters and to advance in the degrees of taqwa by not becoming deluded by this world.

Spreading the truth and advising people to goodness had become his character. He feared no one when it came to warning people of error and unlawful things. He wrote letters of caution even to the Sultan, without reluctance or hesitation.

Abdullah Dahlawi's circle of guidance had grown so large, even while he was still alive, that his successors reached the farthest corners of Byzantium, and spread throughout the world, from Syria to China, from east to the west. Hundreds of scholars and righteous people would come from distant lands to benefit from his company.

His virtues

Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) would spend his nights in *dhikr* and worship. When sleep overcame him, he would lie down on his prayer mat on his right side. Out of his great courtesy and manners, he was never seen to lie down with his legs outstretched. He would mostly sit on his knees. His death also occurred while he was in this state, that is, while he was sitting on his knees.

He would read the Holy Qur'an frequently and would receive great pleasure from listening to it.

He was extremely generous. When giving out he would take great care to make sure it was done in secret. He would have prepared various meals, including sweets and offer them to the needy with the intention of sending the reward for this to the great men that lived before him, and Shah Naqshiband in particular.

When his wealth had reached a sufficient level, he would not wait for one year to pass but would immediately give his zakat. He would donate the remaining for charity.

He was very kind and merciful to the Muslims. He would pray for a very long time during the night for the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

There was never any unnecessary talk in the assemblies of Abdullah Dahlawi. If someone began to backbite another he would prevent them from doing so and say:

"I am more deserving of those negative words than he".

One day while he was fasting, somebody criticised the sultan. He said:

"Alas, our fast has been broken".

One of his students said:

"But sir, you did not backbite". He replied:

"Yes, we did not backbite, but we listened. In backbiting, the one who speaks it and the one who listens are the same"[937].

Abdullah Dahlawi would ignore people's personal faults and loved to cover them up. One time someone came to him and tried to sell him a book that he had borrowed from him previously. Abdullah Dahlawi praised the book and bought it from him. One of his students said:

"But sir, that book is from your library and it has your seal upon it".

He replied:

"The author has made several copies of the same book". He thus closed the matter and did not embarrass anybody[938].

Abdullah Dahlawi showed no consideration for worldly property. Sultans and rulers would beg him to accept money sent to him in order to spend on the needs of the lodge. However, he would politely refuse them.

937. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *Huwal ghani Risale,* p. 152.
938. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 151.

He was an extremely graceful and clean person. He loved beautiful fragrances.

His modesty

Despite being at a very elevated rank, Abdullah Dahlawi was in a constant state of humility and modesty. One day he looked at a dog coming towards him and said:

"O my Lord! Have mercy on me for the sake of this creature. Who am I that people are coming in crowds to use me as a means to be together with Allah? I only ask from my Lord for their sake"[939].

He would say that humility and the feeling of nothingness are the foundations of the path of tasawwuf:

"The constant and most correct expression of this affair is that one should always be seeking forgiveness, in a continual state of feeling faulty and embarrassed, always with a broken heart"[940].

In a beautifully written letter that expresses the sincerity of his humble heart, he writes:

"The life of this old man passed in sin. In particular, acts such as complaining, backbiting, maligning others, censuring them, showing disrespect for elders, objecting to them, all of those prayers deprived of *khushu* and presence, the reading of the Qur'an without complying with the rules of *tajweed*, fasting mixed with vain and futile matters, recitation without pondering the meaning, time passed without remembering Allah, Most High, time passed without feeling *khasyah* (reverent fear of Allah) and breaths taken in heedlessness have blackened our book of deeds.

Shame and shame a thousand times! We came here to gather roses for the world **but have been the bearers of thorns.**

Shame and shame a thousand times, that even though we were given health, well-being and comfort and many other opportunities, we were lacking in our gratitude for them.

939. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 150.
940. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa, p*. 65, no: 65.

Woe and woe again that we were not grateful enough for being given two great bounties such as the Holy Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)whereas these are the bounties most worthy of showing gratitude for.

Allah forbid! We are in a state of confusion! How will we face Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) when we enter their presence tomorrow on the Day of Judgement?

What is this insensitivity and blindness? If it were not for the mercy of Allah, Most High, we would not be given intercession nor forgiveness for this unworthy state of ours. It is only Allah, Most High, who can bestow on us once more the opportunities that we missed, out of his grace and favour, otherwise we have no excuse!

Inna lillah (To Allah we belong). Death is on our doorstep and the Day of Judgement is very near. What deeds have we done that will benefit us? While the righteous servants will enter Paradise, and live in bounty witnessing the beauty of Allah, Most High, we heedless ones will be taken to account on that Day, which measures fifty thousand years. Alas for our state. Would that I had never come to this world! This is the day that we must think about these matters so that we will not be sad on the morrow.

Let us embrace righteous deeds! Let us wake up before the dawn and cry tears of longing. We hear of how those True Friends of Allah who lived before us, struggled and what great sacrifices they made. May Allah, Most High, give us aspiration and energy and a feeling of ashamedness"[941].

His service of others

Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy upon him) spoke of the importance and benefits of serving others as follows:

"Let the one who wants to be served, serve his teacher. Serving others is the one thing that will take a person from the lowest ranks to the highest of stations. It is etiquette and courtesy that raises a person from the level of earth to the highest of the heavens"[942].

941. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 158, no: 91.
942. Rauf Ahmad, *Durru al Ma'arif, p*. 124-125.

“The spiritual growth of the seeker through abstention can never reach a hundreth of the growth that he can achieve through serving others. The work of all of those years can be achieved in an instant through serving others. Serving others makes the believer subject to divine favour”[943].

“The great men who went before us would make their students serve others. This is because such an act is a means for the spiritual growth of the heart and for reward in the hereafter.

“One time a man came to his master and said:

“Sir, command me to some act of service”. His teacher replied:

“All of the acts of service have been distributed amongst the students. I have nothing for you now. However you can bring some green herbs and other things from the field”.

Every day that man carried bunches and bunches of herbs on his head. One night in his dream he saw that it was the Day of Judgement and everyone was being taken to account. The people were passing through an ocean of fire. He immediately threw down the herbs that were on his head over the fire and passed over easily”[944].

His love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

Abdullah Dahlawi was a true friend of Allah whose heart was filled with love of the prophet. Whenever his blessed name was mentioned in his presence he would immediately overflow with feelings of love and respect and become enraptured. He would say:

“We are of those who drink from the sherbet of love. Our love is increased through the hadith and *salawat i sharif* (invoking blessings upon the prophet peace and blessings be upon him), which bestow all manner of pleasures to our hearts”[945].

943. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 68.
944. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 149.
945. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 94.

“Glory be to Allah! When we read the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) we find such amazing prosperity and blessings”[946].

“When people kneel down and sit, they take on the shape formed by the letters Muhammad محمد: Sitting in this way the head takes on the shape of the ‘*mim*’, the two shoulders take on the shape of the ‘*ha*’ and the back the shape of the second ‘*mim*’ and the two legs take on the shape of the ‘*dal*’. If a person sits in this way pondering on the blessed name of that great prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) he will receive great blessings”[947].

“One time I was overcome with the fear of hellfire. I was extremely grieved. Then I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in my dream and he said:

“Do not fear the fire of Hell! Those who bear love for us will not enter Hell”[948].

Some advice

Some of the advice that Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) gave to guide the hearts is as follows:

“Idle talk and backbiting will eliminate the reward for fasting. Backbiting destroys the reward one receives for worship. It is obligatory to shun it. It is great foolishness to struggle and make such efforts to perform one’s worship and then to lose the reward for this through such acts. Deeds are presented to Allah, Most High. Sending our acts of backbiting and idle talk to our Lord is an act of great discourtesy”[949].

“It is obligatory on this path to act in accordance with the commands of the sharia’, in matters related to tasawwuf, in the state of heart, and in physical acts. One should remain distant from the people of heedlessness, spend one’s time performing righteous deeds, turn to one’s heart and to Allah, Most High with one’s heart, remember Him, wake up for the *tahajjud* prayer, avoid

946. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 81.
947. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 84.
948. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 152.
949. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa,* p. 107, no: 85.

spending the time of the predawn in sleep, love others, speak little, sleep little, eat little, refrain from sitting with heedless people, and always be in a state of patience and contentedness, reliance upon Allah, and submission to Him. This is the state of those who desire Allah, Most High.

The opening of the mysteries of *tawheed* is dependent on the amount of *dhikr* one performs. Occupying oneself with *dhikr* is a means for increase in love. The one who truly desires Almighty Allah can never be content with doubts and misgivings and imagination. Woe to those who have reached the end of their life, but have failed to reach the state that they should have reached. Woe to those who spent their time on futile and vain matters"[950].

"One should do much *dhikr*. Without this, the heart will not open up. One should not spend even an instant without remembering Him, without turning to Him and without thinking of how much we need Him. Even when we are amongst the people and are speaking with them, our hearts should be with Allah and we must be in a state of awareness of our Lord.

"Prosperity and blessings come all of a sudden, but they only come to the heart that is awake".

"One should not enter into argument, debate or conjecture with people, as this renders the heart heedless. This is the path of the people of *marifatullah*"[951].

His death

In his letters Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) would generally write the following:

"I wish to give up my spirit at a time when the state of love has overcome me and I am witnessing my Lord. I wish to leave this world in the state expressed by Ibn Yemin in the following lines:

Ibn Yemin's heart is filled with blood, do not look at it

Look and see how he left this mortal world

950. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 31, no: 16.
951. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 67, no: 66.

With the Qur'an in his hand, his eye on his Beloved, and his foot in the footsteps of the True friends

He left this land laughing at the angel of Death

Please pray for me that this wish of mine is fulfilled"[952].

During his last illness, Dahlawi would read Tirmidhi's book on hadith holding it on his chest. If he came across a hadith that mentioned an act of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) he would act upon it. He even tried to eat the foods that the prophet ate.

When his illness became severe, he had the following last testament written:

"Remember Allah always! Preserve your bond with the friends of Allah. Be of good character and get along with the people. Give up asking 'Why' and 'How' in matters related to fate and predestination. Deem it necessary to be united with your brothers in religion. Be upon modesty, contentedness, submission, reliance upon Allah, and selflessness.

Take my corpse to the Great Mosque in which is found the sacred belongings of the prophet and ask the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) to intercede for me"[953].

Abdullah Dahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 1240 (1824AD). He was buried to the right of his teacher[954].

Words of wisdom

• "Remembering Allah with a heart filled with sorrow and a feeling of servanthood, and turning to Him are the most important means for being accepted by Allah. Let us not remain heedless of these?"[955]

• "There are many travellers running along the path of love ignited by the love of their Friend and burning themselves. They withdrew from (desire of)

952. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 97, no: 79; p. 217, no: 108.
953. *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* I, 76.
954. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 148-167; Abdulhayy Hasani, *al-I'lam/Nuzhat al Khawatir,* VII, 392-395.
955. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 25, no: 11.

both worlds, and delved into witnessing the True Beloved. O Allah! Revive me with Your Love. Resurrect me with Your Love"[956].

• "Make things easy for the person that you give *amr bi'l mar'uf* to for the first time"[957].

• "There are four things that are essential on this path of ours. Removing one's hand from the unlawful, preventing one's foot from stepping towards the unlawful, embracing the religion wholeheartedly, and being a person of complete certainty"[958].

• "Tasawwuf is to be with Allah, Most High, to adopt beautiful character, and to comply with the sharia'. It is to remove from the heart everything that distances one from Allah, Most High, and adorn every limb through following the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)"[959].

• "The standard for being an acceptable servant in the eyes of Allah is to follow the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). If there is not complete obedience and devotion to the Beloved Prophet in the beliefs, character, deeds and state of a certain Sufi order then there will be no demand for that order and it will not be able to continue"[960].

• "There is no value in a matter that is not in accordance with the Age of Bliss. Whatever the path and whatever the deed, if it does not resemble the path of the Companions of the Messenger, then it is dangerous"[961].

• "How can a person who follows the desires of their *nafs* be a slave to Allah?"[962].

• "There are four types of people: the cowardly, the brave, the generous and the individual.

– The one who desires the world is cowardly,

– The one who desires the hereafter is brave,

956. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makamat-i Mazhariyya,* p. 22.
957. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 153.
958. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 153.
959. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa,* p. 105, no: 85.
960. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 88, no: 75.
961. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 225, no: 111.
962. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 26; Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 156.

– The one who desires the hereafter and Allah, Most High, is generous,

– The one who only desires Allah, Most High, is the individual (who is worth a whole community)[963].

• "Servanthood is not complete until one reaches the station of submission. Submission and contentment are the final stations of the *sayr u suluq*"[964].

• "Whatever the people of Allah happen to be doing, they will immediately stop it and run to prayer when they hear the call (adhan)"[965].

• "Egoism is to claim divinity. You cannot reach Allah without first uprooting your ego"[966].

• "Any perfection that appears in the community of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) after him, is due to his perfection wherever it happens to appear"[967]

• "The life of this world is but one day, and we should be fast on that day (That is, we need to prevent our *nafs* from sin)"[968].

• "Whoever utters a thousand times, "Ya Rabb! Ya Rabb!" after midnight will have all of their problems made easy and all of their wishes fulfilled and their prayers will be accepted"[969].

963. Abdulghani ibn Abi Said, *ibid,* p. 157.
964. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 79, no: 71.
965. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 36.
966. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 44.
967. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 126.
968. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 143.
969. Rauf Ahmad, *ibid,* p. 148.

30. Mawlana Khalid-i Baghdadi

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1779-1827]

Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) was the renewer of his age, and was an ocean of both inner and outer knowledge. His lineage goes back to Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) on his father's side, and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them him) on his mother's side. His title was Ziyauddin and he was known as Uthmani.

Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi was born in the town of Zur in the north of Baghdad. Even from a very young age he possessed a sharp intelligence, strong memory, strong will and was extremely hard working so that he reached a very high station in both the rational and traditional sciences of that time. He specialised in practically all fields including mathematics, engineering and astronomy. Whenever he was asked a question about any of the sciences he would reply immediately, and leave everyone in awe of his superior intelligence and deep knowledge. He learned from many of the great scholars of the time and took his licence from them. He thus became the highest of the scholars and masters of tasawwuf of that period. Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi lived a life of abstention and taqwa and became aware of the mysteries of the Holy Qur'an. He was the scholar of scholars. He was known as the '*Shamsu as Shumus'* that is, the sun of suns. He had knowledge of the mysteries of reality and of the reality of mysteries.

Even before he received his *ijaza* and while he was still a student, he became distinguished in his knowledge and drew the attention of all around him. One time when Abdurrahman Pasha, the administrator of Suleymaniye visited him, he was amazed by his knowledge and wisdom and made him the following offer:

"Take your pick of any of the madrasahs of Suleymaniye and you may be its teacher".

However Khalid Baghdadi did not accept this offer due to his elevated *zuhd* and taqwa. Since he had not yet received his *ijaza*, he said out of respect for the traditions of scholarship:

"I am not competent for this service..."[970].

A little while later his teacher died of tuberculosis and he was forced to take his teacher's position. Many famous scholars from various lands came to him and benefitted from him by having their various difficulties solved. However, since Mawlana Khalid desired to turn to Allah with supererogatory prayer, in addition, to the obligatory duties, he would not sit with the judges, governors or rulers and would behave independently towards everyone.

Mawlana Khalid's words had a great impact on all people, be they common or knowledgeable. He lived an upright life that was admired by even the greatest of scholars. He was a true Friend of Allah, loved by all, very patient and content. He was an extremely honourable man, teary-eyed, his heart full of divine attraction, and the traces of his deep contemplation could be seen on his face[971].

His trip to the Hijaz

After teaching for seven years, Khalid Baghdadi set out for the Hijaz in the year 1805, motivated by his deep love for the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He was shown great respect on the way by the scholars of Syria. During this time he received a Qadiri *ijaza* from a man called Mustafa Kurdi. However he still believed that he had to advance more in the path of perfection, displaying great modesty and humility. This is why when he reached Madina, his desire was to find a perfect *wali* and submit to him in order to advance spiritually.

Hence, that great ocean of knowledge reached Madina in this state of mind. One day he encountered a man whose face was filled with light. He was immediately attracted to this Friend of Allah, who was from the Yemen

970. Ibrahim FasIh, *al-Majdu al Talid,* p. 125; Hasan Shukri, *Shamsu al Shumus,* p. 207, 219.
971. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 125.

and asked him for counsel, just as an ignorant man would ask for advice from a scholar. That man said to him:

"O Khalid! When you reach Mecca, if you happen to see something contrary to adab, do not immediately think bad of the one you see, and thus come to the wrong conclusion. Keep your eye and your heart away from finding faults and blame. Keep busy with your own inner world".

At first what looked like a concealed caution turned out in reality to be an indication of the mysterious appearance of the Perfect Guide Abdullah Dahlawi, who would allow Mawlana Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on them both) to reach his true station.

However, when he arrived in Mecca, Khalid Baghdadi was overcome by spiritual excitement and his heart was almost intoxicated so that on one Friday, he saw a strange-looking dervish with a radiant face and dishevelled clothes. He was struck by this dervish who had turned his back to the Ka'bah and was looking at him. He said to himself:

"This man is not showing the required respect towards the Great Ka'bah. He is sitting with his back turned to the Ka'bah.

At that point, that man who sat straight across from him said to Khalid Baghdadi:

"Do you not know that respect for a believer is better than respect for the Ka'bah. (This is because the heart is the recipient of Divine manifestations. A sound heart is the House of Allah). In that case why do you oppose turning my face to you and my back to the Ka'bah? How quick did you forget the advice given to you by that righteous man in Madina?"

Upon hearing these words, Mawlana Khalid realised that this man was not just any ordinary man but was a great saint, and he apologised and immediately grabbed his hand, saying:

"O righteous man! Please help me and accept me as your student". Looking out onto the depths of the horizon, that mysterious dervish said:

"Your opening will not come in this land". He then pointed in the direction of India and said:

"You will receive a sign from there, and your opening will appear there"*[972]*.

That is, he indicated that his spiritual training would reach its perfection, under the guidance of Abdullah Dahlawi, in the city of Delhi, in India. These words deeply impacted Mawlana Khalid. After performing his hajj, he returned to his hometown of Suleymaniye. He began to teach once more. His *taqwa* and beautiful state increased day by day. However he was thinking of India, day and night, and traces of longing and pain could be seen upon him.

Not long passed when one day one of the students of Abdullah Dahlawi arrived, whilst Khalid Baghdadi was suffering from these spiritual convulsions. When he mentioned his teacher in India, Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi was convinced that this was the sign he had been waiting for, and he immediately began preparing for his journey. He left his madrasah and his students. They did not want him to go since they loved him so much. They told him of how they would be worried about him, since the place he was going was filled with danger due to the political situation. Despite all of this, Khalid Baghdadi used the example of the prophet Musa's determination, under divine command, to seek out and find Khidr (peace be upon them both) and learn from him and showing his determination to go to India, he said:

"If you are looking for the water of life, you must go to the darkness"*[973]*.

His journey to India

In a short time Khalid Baghdadi had completed his preparations for the journey, and set out with the disciple of Abdullah Dahlawi. They began to journey over mountains and through valleys, with the enthusiasm to meet his teacher who enveloped his entire being. Khalid Baghdadi's knowledge and spirituality left a great impact on every town he stopped by, and he was bid farewells by the town's scholars, governor, commanders, and people with great admiration and attention. During this time, he visited Allama Mawlana Sanaullah, the successor of Mazhar Jan-e Janaan (may Allah have mercy on

972. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 126.
973. Khalid-i Baghdadi, *Divan*, bayt: 47.

them both), in a town near Lahore. He narrates what happened to him here as follows:

"I stayed in this town for one night. In my dream I saw Abdullah Dahlawi strongly pull me towards him. I awoke in amazement and went to see Mawlana Sanaullah. Without me saying a word, he said:

"O Khalid! Know that serving our master Abdullah Dahlawi is a great bounty for you! O Khalid! To enter into his presence and to serve him is the only means for you to encounter the bounties that have been promised you. Embrace this means with all your strength. Never forget the principles of sincerity and submission even for an instant".

Upon this I immediately left there and set out for Delhi. I swear that forty days before I reached my teacher, his subtle spiritual guidance began to reach me. In fact, my respected teacher informed some of his friends of me being on this journey"[974].

In the presence of Abdullah Dahlawi

After journeying for a year, Mawlana Khalid finally arrived in Delhi (Jihanabad). He gave out all of his belongings that he had brought with him for the journey to the poor. He said to himself:

"O Khalid! Your whole life passed in leadership. Now be a slave and serve that King"[975].

He then immediately entered the presence of Abdullah Dahlawi. He listened to the principles of the Naqshibandiyya path from his teacher, with great attention and enthusiasm and began to apply them to his own life.

He left aside his own advanced state and served his master humbly striving to progress spiritually. He would run to the do chores of the lodge, clean, prepare the water for ablution and spend his remaining time in *dhikr*, *muraqaba* and striving (*mujahada*). When the brothers would gather for the *suhbah* and *dhikr*, Mawlana Khalid would sit in the back row, near the shoes. He would not mingle amongst the people other than for *suhbah* and serving

974. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 129-130.
975. Kavak, *Divan-i Mawlana Khalidi Baghdadi,* bayt: 806.

them. He would close the door of his cell and occupy himself with *dhikr* and worship.

Shaykh Ahmad Saeed, one of Abdullah Dahlawi's leading students, said:

"Mawlana Khalid's cell would remain closed from the day he entered the presence of his master until the day he returned to his hometown. He would not leave it unless he had to. He was living in a mysterious realm, deep within himself. It was a result of these spiritual states that he reached such an elevated degree. This is how seekers who wish to reach Allah should be"[976].

During this time, the scholars and shaykhs of Delhi, who had heard about Mawlana Khalid's knowledge and capacity for years, would come to visit him. However, he had withdrawn into his own solitude and was so engulfed in the ocean of his spirit that he sent them news saying:

"I will not preoccupy myself with anything until I have realised my aim in coming here. Please excuse me".

"In complying with the rule of courtesy that one should go and welcome a visitor who has come from another land, the great saint of India, Shah Abdulaziz also came to visit him. A seeker said to Mawlana Khalid:

"The master of India has come to see you". With the same level of courtesy, Khalid Baghdadi said:

"Please send him my greetings (of salam) and tell him that after I have achieved my aim I will visit him"[977].

One day Khalid Baghdadi was extremely tired from cleaning the tiles of the lavatory. Taking advantage of this momentary weakness his *nafs* began to whisper misgivings into his ear:

"O you peerless ocean of knowledge of Baghdad and Syria! O Mawlana Khalid! You travelled long and hard to come here, upon the word of a man who you do not know was a saint or a madman. Now have you found what you were looking for? Look, there is no training or education and no *sayr u suluq*! What have they made you do for months other than clean the lavatory day and night? Is this the spiritual knowledge that you were in search of?"

976. Kawthari, *Ighamu al Marid,* p. 55-56.
977. Nadwi, *Imam Rabbani,* p. 405.

Khalid Baghdadi was strongly shaken up by these dangerous insinuations. He immediately tore up the veil of heedlessness that his *nafs* was trying to put in front of him, with sincerity, genuineness and submission and he said:

"O my nafs! If you try to avoid this honourable chore that my blessed teacher has given me, even for a breath, without thinking it a duty, I will make you wipe the floors not with a mop but with my own beard".

Abdullah Dahlawi was watching his state from afar, with a smile on his face. After seeing him defeat his *nafs*, with this final punch, he saw the angels begin to carry Mawlana Khalid's buckets and mop. Moreover, a light began to shine from his shoulders towards the heavens, those same shoulders which had sores all over them from carrying water on them.

Extremely pleased at this, Abdullah Dahlawi called his extraordinary student to him and said:

"My son Khalid! You reached an unparalleled rank in your knowledge. Nevertheless, you needed to adorn it with spirituality. This is why it was necessary for you to go through purification of your nafs and a cleansing of your heart. Otherwise your nafs would have driven you to the pits of pride and arrogance and ruined you. All praise be to Allah that you have taken your nafs under your feet and scaled the peaks of perfection. Now the angels see to your affairs.

My son! Our masters, who we have devoted ourselves to, are people of the sharia, tariqa, haqiqa and marifa. Now you, as a mujaddid, have become a link in their chain. The guidance of many lands now awaits you. May Allah, Most High, make your aspirations high" [978].

After that Abdullah Dahlawi frequently spent time alone with this great student of his, whom he had made carry out such harsh service, struggle and abstention. He taught him more specialised and deeper matters of Sufism.

Before five months had passed, Abdullah Dahlawi informed him that he had become one of the people of presence (*huzur*) and *mushahada* (witnessing). Mawlana Khalid became the apple of his teacher's eye.

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978. See Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* VIII, 185-186.

He would completely degrade his *nafs* by performing simple chores with the greatest of humility and struggled to break the desires of his *nafs* through strict abstention. Ten months later he became unparalleled in his time, and a model of a true Friend of Allah.

Eventually his teacher gave him full and complete *ijaza* in the orders of the **Naqshibandiyya, Qadiriyya, Suhrawardiyya**, **Kubrawiya**, and **Chishtiyya**. In addition he also gave him full license to teach sciences such as hadith, tafsir, and tasawwuf and transmission of his own *awrad* and *hizb*. He then commanded him to return to his homeland and guide the people there who were thirsty for spirituality[979].

Duty of guiding others

When the time came to part, there were tears of love in the eyes of both. How great was the difference between the coming and going of Mawlana Khalid! Abdullah Dahlawi personally sent his favourite student off on his journey. In spite of Mawlana Khalid's embarrassment and etiquette, Abdullah Dahlawi took the stirrups of the horse and mounted his precious student upon the horse himself. Together with his successor and his students they accompanied them for four miles on their journey. After they were finally gone, he said to those around him:

"Khalid has taken everything with him".

It was with such a farewell that Mawlana Khalid set off for Baghdad and he did not refrain from guiding to goodness and truth the people of the towns and villages that they passed by on the way[980].

Khalid Baghdadi's circle of guidance grew quite rapidly. Great scholars began to arrive from everywhere, even from distant lands, to visit him and take their blessings from him. His noble lodge was overflowing. On the one hand he was guiding the people coming in crowds, and on the other, he was teaching the sciences of tafsir, hadith, fiqh and tasawwuf. In this way he was reviving the *dhikr* of the great *mujtahid* scholars, and of the noble *awliya*.[981]

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979. See Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa,* p. 83, no: 73; Ibn Abidin, *Sallu al Husam,* p. 322; Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 131.
980. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 132-133.
981. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 136, 138.

During that time, Said Pasha, the governor of Baghdad came to visit him. When he arrived he saw that the people, even great scholars, were sitting silently, with their heads bowed down, in great courtesy, like servants. When Mawlana Khalid entered at that moment, he saw his majesty and stateliness and his knees wavered and began to shake. In a soft voice, he asked for his prayer. Mawlana Khalid prayed that he would be given a good end-affair that is that he would give his last breath in a state of faith:

"On the Day of Judgement, everyone will be taken to account for their own nafs. However, you will be taken to account not only for your own nafs, but about those who were under your command. Therefore fear Allah, Most High, with a great fear, for there is such a day awaiting you that mothers breastfeeding their babies will forget their babies out of their fear and terror on that day. Out of their fear the pregnant will give birth. You will see the people drunk but they will not be drunk, for the punishment of Allah, Most High, is surely intense."

Upon this warning and this guidance, Said Pasha began to shake even more and he began weeping in a loud voice. Mawlana Khalid rose and placed his blessed hand on Pasha's neck and they went together to the *zawiya,* which was next to the masjid[982].

Mawlana Khalid trained countless numbers of students. His students' devotion and submission to him was quite admirable. As'ad Sadruddin, the mufti of Baghdad, the shaykh of the scholars, the governor of Baghdad, and the teacher of the vizier Dawud Pasha, would say:

"If my teacher, Mawlana Khalid were to command me to: "Put that pot of milk on your head, take it to the markets and walk around them, selling it" I would obey his command without hesitation"[983].

In his assemblies of knowledge, **Shaykh Ali Suwaydi** would say: **"Mawlana Khalid is like the infinite ocean in the outer and inner sciences, whilst we are a mere drop"[984].**

Despite their extensive knowledge and elevated state, the scholars of Baghdad would come to Mawlana Khalid and obey him and affiliate them-

982. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 134-135.
983. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 137; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 232.
984. Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 249.

selves with him, and this for him was a favour of Allah not bestowed on any other.

However there were those who were jealous of him. However, it is a reality that those with elevated virtues will always face hostile people as a test; hence there were those who were unable to tolerate Mawlana Khalid. In fact, they even wrote a book slandering him. However, Mawlana Khalid did not pay attention to their accusations and slander and did not even respond. In contrast, he treated them well and prayed for them. Some scholars wrote books that refuted their books[985].

One man who envied him was one of the ministers of the Palace in Istanbul, Mawlawi Khalet Efendi. He could not tolerate Mawlana Khalid's fame and reputation.

Finally one day he found the chance to denigrate him in front of the Sultan and said:

"My sultan! He has tens of thousands of men. This situation is extremely dangerous for the nation and for the sultanate. Obviously it has become essential that he be removed before the threat becomes larger".

Sultan Mahmud Han replied:

"No harm can come to the state from this blessed man of religion rather he can bring us great benefit".

When Mawlana Khalid (may Allah have mercy on him) heard of this, he was saddened not due to any personal reasons, but due to the harm that may come to his service and spiritual path and to the countless number of believers who took benefit from it. After praying for the Sultan, he said:

"The affair of Khalet Efendi has been referred to Jalaluddin Rumi. He will go to him personally and give him his punishment".

Not long passed before Khalet Efendi was exiled to Konya due to him leading the Mora Rebellion where he was later executed[986].

985. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 133; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 212.
986. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 151; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 245.

As can be seen, those who cause pain to the friends of Allah and offend their gentle hearts, will have invoked divine anger, and will be subject to His punishment. A divine hadith indicates this truth as follows:

"I will wage war on the one who is hostile to My friend …" (Bukhari, Riqaq, 38).

Sometimes Almighty Allah gives the punishment to such heedless people in this world and lets him be a lesson for others; while other times He delays his punishment to the next world, as a divine test.

As for the friends of Allah, they accept without hesitation the apology of those who have offended them, and do not turn it into a matter of honour or pride. In fact, they even respond with goodness to those who have harmed them, if there is no risk of the evil done harming the community, and which only concerns them personally.

As an example of this altruism of the heart, when Hallaj'i Mansur (may Allah have mercy on him), who has a unique place in the hearts of the gnostics and Lovers of Allah, was being stoned, he cried out:

"O my Lord! Forgive those who stone me before You forgive me".

Similarly, the great friends of Allah, Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) did not become angry with someone who was disrespectful towards him but smiled at him. However, that person responsible reached a state in which he was almost ruined after suffering from great distress. He then realised his mistake and repented. When he passed by that man's house, Shah Naqshiband went inside and asked about him. Then he said:

"Allah, Most High, is the One who heals. Do not fear, by His will you will recover".

Feeling extremely regretful that man said:

"Sir, I was disrespectful towards you, I offended you, please forgive me".

Upon this, Bahauddin Naqshiband replied:

"At that time, my heart was hurt. But now it is clear. Know this well that the sword of the shaykh is like a sharp sword that has come out of its sheath. However, the shaykh is merciful; he does not use this sword to stab anyone.

It is only that those who seek trouble come and get stabbed by the sword themselves".

In short, despite the negative propaganda against Khalid Baghdadi by those who envied him, the halo of love around him continued to expand, by the grace of Allah. It was so that many scholars and gnostics were yearning to come under his training and guidance. In a very short time, he had trained countless numbers of murids and khalifas. The great Hanafi faqih, Ibn Abidin and the writer of the tafsir called Ruh al-Maani, Alusi, were amongst his khalifas.

Imam Shamil, the Caucasian hero, who fought against the Russians for twenty four years with honour and fame, was also from this blessed chain.

We must make this clear, in particular, that tasawwuf, which has produced such mujahid commanders such as these and many others, does not, as many ignorant people claim, encourage people to withdraw themselves from society, and retreat into a corner. On the contrary Sufism is an elevated dynamic institution that enjoins both inner and outer jihad.

He established tasawwuf upon the lines of the sharia

Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi's influence and impact on tasawwuf was great indeed. This was so much so that after him, the Naqshiband way was practically called the Khalidi way, and this branch became the most widespread of the schools of tasawwuf in the lands of the Ottomans.

Mawlana Khalid brought to the sciences of the sharia and the spiritual sciences, a kind of new taste from the Age of Bliss. He defended the pure religion, which had been threatened by the false beliefs of that time, and he preserved tasawwuf in its essence. He spent his entire life in accordance with the verse: '...**do not put yourselves forward in front of Allah and of His Messenger**[987]…**that is, beware of the heedlessness and nerve of putting forth your own opinions and standards above the Book and the Messenger"** and he never compromised on any of the sharia rulings.

987. Hujurat, 1.

He would warn those who inclined towards their *nafs*, who parted from the way of the Sunnah, and who indulged in innovation (*bid'a*) and persisted in doing so until they were reformed.

It was on account of his efforts that Baghdad became known as '*majmau al-bahrayn'* that is, 'the place where the two oceans of the physical and the spiritual met'. It was due to him that it once again became apparent that the sciences of the sharia and of tasawwuf were not in opposition to each other, but rather completed each other, so that they perfected people's morality. The lights of the *sharia*, *tariqa* and *haqiqa* shone together like the full moon rising in the hearts.

When Khalid Baghdadi migrated to Syria, that blessed land also began to come to life. The innovations that had invaded that land were reduced to a minimum through his selfless struggle[988].

Khalid Baghdadi writes in one of his letters:

"Tariqa is the way of reaching *marifatullah*. It gains for us the pleasure of Allah, Most High, and the virtue that comes from following the prophet. The principles of tariqa are to embrace the creed of the *ahl al sunnah*, which is the group who will be saved, to shun the *ruhsah* and act upon *azimah*, to continually turn towards Allah, Most High, and turn one's face away from the adornment and embellishments of this world and in fact from everything other than Allah, Most High, and to gain the state of *ihsan* which is described in the hadith, which is to perceive oneself as constantly in the presence of Allah.

The hadith states:

"Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him for even if you do not see Him, He sees you"[989].

In addition, this path consists of being with Allah even among the people, as if you were alone, to occupy oneself with study and education, to wear the simple clothes of ordinary believers, to conceal one's *dhikr*, and to preserve one's breaths to such a degree that one does not take even one breath in heedlessness of Allah, and to adopt the elevated character of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

988. As'ad Sahib, *Bughyat al Wajid,* p. 190-191, no: 56.
989. Bukhari, Iman, 37; Muslim, Iman, 1.

In short, this path is the noble path of the blessed Companions, neither more nor less. It consists of acting with the *azimah* described in the Qur'an and the Sunnah"[990].

In another letter Khalid Baghdad writes:

"It is clear that the most vital of etiquette, of all the paths and in particular of the blessed Naqshiband tariq is to follow the sharia, to be patient with all one's might in times of distress and hardship, to thank Allah with one's entire being in times of plenty and ease, to revive the Sunnah of the prophet, and to distance oneself from vile innovations, to continue to plead to Allah with a broken heart, and to strive, day and night, to eliminate the unnecessary thoughts (*khawatir*) that arise in one's heart –even if they are in relation to the hereafter. This is so that a spiritual wakefulness and *dhikr* will become established in the heart; so that the heart will be as if it sees Allah constantly, and it is left with no concern, in this world and the next, other than the True Beloved. Combine the state of '*khayrah'*, with constant *dhikr* and awareness. Show complete submission to Allah, Most High, in all of your affairs...

Act with *azimah* to the best of your ability. If you cannot obtain something completely, then you do not need to abandon it completely.

There is a very precious saying of the friends of Allah:

"The ways leading to Allah are closed except to those who follow the Messenger of Allah step by step".

The essence of the matter is this: to annihilate the ego, to strive with all one's might, to keep one's promise and to be content with what one has"[991].

One of the great scholars of the time, Muhammad Amin Suwaydi says in his book al-Sahmu al-Saib:

"Mawlana Khalid would call others to act by the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and would measure his own acts by the standard of these two.

He would not accept any inspirations or unveilings that came to his heart without finding a proof for them in these two just witnesses; the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

990. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 78, no: 4.
991. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 81, no: 5.

One day he said to me:

"According to those of us who are from the Naqshibandiyya, we do not rely upon inspiration in the matter of the rulings of the sharia. It is not acceptable to rely upon inspiration".

I said:

"Sir, the scholars of *kalam* (theology) and *usul* say that you can rely upon inspiration if it is in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah".

He replied:

"If the inspiration is in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, then you will be acting in this direction anyway, and not as required by inspiration".

This expression shows how careful Mawlana Khalid was in matters of religion, and how he was in complete obedience to the Qur'an and the Sunnah"[992].

In his book *Nuzhat al-Albab*, Imam Alusi writes about his teacher Mawlana Khalid as follows:

"... He lived a youth filled with virtues and he spread the beauty of Islam around him.

He was extremely determined in walking the path of the *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'ah*. He would not spend even an instant in futility, and would either solve a matter of Islamic law, or occupy himself with worship. His outer behaviour and character was beautiful. His heart was prosperous and filled with light...

In short, there has never been any person from this century who gathered together all of the virtues as he did. I have never seen the likes of him..."[993].

Ibn Abidin, the Hanafi scholar of fiqh writes about his teacher Khalid Baghdadi as follows:

"...He never inclined towards this world or worldly people. He would turn to Allah always. He would give himself entirely to Allah, with various

992. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 294.
993. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 296.

acts of worship from the obligatory and the supererogatory. He would not visit the rulers of the state. He never compromised in the matter of advising to good, preventing from evil, and teaching the divine rulings. He did not let the censure of others stop him from walking in the path of Allah. His words were effective, and his character beautiful. He would constantly act with *azimah*..."[994].

He would place great importance on knowledge and fiqh in particular, and would request his students to respect the scholars and *hafiz*, to occupy themselves with the Qur'an to the best of their ability, to be sensitive in carrying out their acts of guidance in accordance with the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thus, he made it clear that it was only by embracing the sharia that it would be possible to reach the aims of the Sufi order[995].

With the moving away of Europe from religion in response to the positivism of the 19th century, our own nation was also affected and as a result, our spiritual consciousness and our attachment to the sharia were weakened The spread of the Khalidi movement, which coincided with this time, played a unique role in preventing the spread of these negative currents. Mawlana Khalid (may Allah have mercy on him) led the list of those perfected guides who served at such a vital and sensitive period.

His fulfilled a precious service in the way that by training hundreds of successors he made the Naqshibandiyya even more widespread in the Islamic lands and increased the number of perfected Muslims.

This spreading and dispensing of spirituality may be one of the factors that delayed, to a great extent, the spiritual crisis of our recent history. In truth, the spirituality of the masses was strengthened as a result and the religion was cleansed of innovations (*bid'a*).

Istiqama and *sirat al mustaqim*

Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) continually encouraged those who loved him to be upright and follow the *sirat al mustaqim* (straight path) and in one of his letters he writes:

994. Ibn Abidin, *ibid,* p. 319.
995. See As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* no: 28, 35, 42, 76, 78, 88, 93, 99, 100.

"... We ask Almighty Allah to continue to bestow uprightness upon us and you. Strive with all your might for the causes of *istiqama* for ***istiqama* is better than a thousand acts of working miracles**. I advise you to revive the Sunnah, to purge the vile innovations, and occupy yourselves sincerely with the spreading of the Islamic sciences. I also encourage you to embrace the etiquette of our chosen masters, to destroy your egos, to use your opportunities in the way of Allah, to be patient in those things that you do not have, and turn with your entire being, to Allah, the sole King and Lord. I also request that you remember me in your prayers"[996].

In a treatise in which he explains the principles of faith, Khalid Baghdadi writes:

"The bridge of Sirat is thinner than hair, and sharper than a sword. To live Islam in this world is also like this. To strive to live Islam completely is like passing over the bridge of Sirat. Those who endure the difficulty of struggling with their *nafs* will pass over the Bridge in ease. As for those who do not follow Islam, and who indulge in their desires and whims, they will experience extreme difficulty and hardship when passing over that Bridge. This is why Allah, Most High, termed the path shown by Islam to be the 'Sirat al Mustaqim'. This similarity indicates how being on the path of Islam is like passing over the bridge of Sirat. Those destined for hellfire will not be able to pass over it and will fall into Hell"[997].

Advice to his brother who went to Hajj

Mawlana Khalid gave the following advice to Mahmud Sahib, his brother who asked for permission to go for Hajj.

"...I advise you to have *taqwa* before Allah, to obey Him, to refrain from causing harm and pain to the people, and to be especially sensitive in the Haram al Sharafayn".

'Even if they backbite you do not backbite anyone. Do not take anything worldly from anyone without a right, only take that which the religion has considered lawful and spend this for good purposes. Do not seek to spend

996. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 267, no: 98.
997. Kemahli Feyzullah, *The iman that everybody needs,* Istanbul 1997, p. 56.

your wealth on your own pleasures and desires while your believing brothers' families go hungry.

Never ever tell a lie, nor belittle any other person, and never see yourself above others. Put all your efforts into worship with your heart and your body. Moreover consider yourself a wretch who has never performed any good deed. For intention (*niyah*) is the spirit (*ruh*) of worship. Making an intention is impossible without sincerity. If sincerity is necessary for those who were greater than you, than how can it not be necessary for you? **I swear by Allah, that since the day my mother gave birth to me, I do not believe that I have performed a single righteous deed and how can you see me better than yourself!"**

If you do not see yourself as being bankrupt of all good deeds, then this is the peak of ignorance. If you do see yourself as bankrupt, then never lose hope in the mercy of Allah. The grace and favour of Allah, Most High, is better for His servant than the deeds of all of mankind and the jinn. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

'Say: 'It is the favour of Allah and His mercy that should be the cause of their rejoicing. That is better than anything they accumulate' (Yunus, 10:58).

In his commentary on this verse, **Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him)** says that what is meant by 'what they accumulate' is their 'acquisition, that is what they gain'.

Do not be like those who Satan plays with their mind so that they trust in the grace of Allah and give up their worship. Let your heart continue to remember Allah! And do not be lax in this even when you are walking down the road".

Depend on the strength, power and might of Allah, Most High, in all of your affairs. Ask for help from the spirits of the blessed guides of the Naqshi order. Show respect to the people of knowledge and to the memorisers (hafiz) of the Holy Qur'an. Occupy yourself as much as you can with the Holy Qur'an. Furthermore, study the science of fiqh more than the others.

Do not let your spiritual endeavours keep you away from fulfilling your duties to others. To fail to bring together the constant state of *dhikr* of the

heart and one's worldly responsibilities is a sign of narrowness and weakness in one's spirituality.

Continue to do your supererogatory prayers such as *tahajjud*, *ishraq*, *awwabin* and the *duha* prayers. Try to be in a constant state of ablution. Sleep little. Say the following glorification three times a day:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ وَرِضَا نَفْسِهِ
وَزِنَةَ عَرْشِهِ وَمِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ

"I praise Allah and absolve Him of attributes that are not in accord with His godhead to the number of creatures as much as He pleases and to the weight of the Arsh and to an infinite number of words" (Muslim, Dhikr, 79).

Do not meddle in the affairs of the rulers even if they ask you to. Pray for the guidance of the imams, viziers, amirs (commanders) and soldiers of the Muslims and that they be from the righteous.

Ask Allah, Most High, that He makes Islam reign over the unbelievers and the innovators.

What you need to do is to abandon your ego and spend all of your efforts in the way of Allah, to be content with what wealth you have and to tightly embrace the Sunnah of the Possessor of the Station of Mahmud"[998].

His poetic skills

Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him), who was at the peak of knowledge and tasawwuf, was also unique in his ability to write poetry. The poems he wrote were an ocean of wisdom and mystery filled with verses from the depth of his spirituality. The compilation of this great ocean, 'Diwan in Persian' leaves the hearts in amazement at its beauty. When it is studied one can see the fire burning constantly in his heart.

His love for Almighty Allah, His Messenger, the Ka'bah and his own teacher overflows from his heart and his tears flow into his pen like pearls. Moreover, from there it becomes verse which is unparalleled in its beauty.

998. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 138-141, no: 28.

The meanings of some of these verses about divine love are as follows:

"O my Lord! I can never praise You as You are worthy of praise! And for a person who is destined to die to claim such a thing is utter foolishness.

I swear by Allah that if I were given an eternal life and I had nothing else to do but praise Allah, and if I were given two thousand tongues each of which could speak thousands of languages for every hair on my body, and if my nafs and Satan were distanced from me so that they could not distract me by putting doubts in my heart, and if I were to spend my life praising Him, with my entire being, without pause, I could never thank Him enough for even a single bounty that He has bestowed on me! So how can I thank Him enough for each bounty or for all of them entirely... and showing gratitude is another bounty in itself!"[999]

The meaning of some of the verses he wrote about the love he felt for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) are as follows:

"Peace be upon You o Prophet for whom ever since the earth has been a resting place for you, the black earth will not condescend to show the blue sky its face".

Peace be upon You o Prophet for whom even the highest of high stations is a hundred thousand years lower than Your station of closeness to Allah" (*Divan, Bayt*: 130-131).

"O best of all creation! Who am I to send peace upon You? Peace, a hundred times to You at every instant from the Lord of the worlds!

O refuge of the rebels! I have come to your door to ask for your protection, with my endless sins. Would that I could ever kiss the place where your blessed foot stepped!" (*Divan*, Bayt 136-137).

"O my heart, be aware! for there are manifestations in this holy land, raining down upon the wakeful hearts from the light of that everlasting beauty! (*Divan*, Bayt: 172).

"It may be possible to fit the world into a fig seed but his praise can never be achieved in the languages of this world!" (*Divan*, Bayt: 188).

999. Kavak, *Divan*, bayt: 1140-1146.

"Maashallah how generous a man he is, such that it is on behalf of his existence, which exudes generosity that the pearl comes from the ocean, rubies from rock, and roses from thorns".

"If his beautiful character is mentioned in a garden of roses, there would not be a single rosebud which would not smile".

"On the Day when people of fame and fortune will be crying and wailing, salvation will only be possible through his beautiful compliment" (*Divan*, Bayt: 192-194).

"If he were not to come to the arena of the Mahsher (gathering place) with his attribute of being the Beloved of Allah, then even the prophets waiting there would be terrified" (*Divan*, Bayt: 211).

"O Khalid! Were you to exchange even a single hair of the Messenger of Allah for both worlds, they would limit your freedom to use your wealth as you please thinking that you were not of sound mind" (*Divan*, Bayt: 513).

Mawlana Khalid also penned the following lines in order to encourage others to earn their eternal happiness:

"O my soul! Do not exchange eternal happiness for this world. If you look carefully, you will see that this entire world consists only but a few of breaths.

If you are king for as long as you are in this world then its beginning will be a headache and its end will be regret" (*Divan,* Bayt: 452-453).

His beautiful character and virtue

Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) was in a constant state of seeking refuge in and supplicating to Almighty Allah. He would endure the most difficult of hardships and struggles.

He was well-spoken and good company. His humour was sweet and his speech brought peace to the one listening. His explanations and expositions were filled with wisdom. His heart was resolute, his words clear and his language fluent. He took widows and orphans under his wing. He wished to serve Islam always and he would take every opportunity to do so. When he migrated to Syria, he restored many mosques that were almost in ruins. He

would revive them by establishing the prayer and with his *dhikr* he would guide the people in the matter of the divine commands and prohibitions[1000].

Mawlana Khalid had a very dignified character. He would meticulously follow the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in his habits of eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, sitting, standing and other acts. Those who were in his service expressed that they never saw him abandon a single Sunnah or a divine command. In fact some pious scholars who stayed with him for one year saw that he always entered the mosque with his right foot and exited with his left foot. They too never ever encountered an act that was not in accordance with the Sunnah. This is why many of the scholars affiliated themselves with him, knowing him to be trustworthy in the matter of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)[1001].

Khalid Baghdadi was the King of generosity. He was a man of grace and mercy. He would show great kindness and mercy to the needy, poor, and the orphans and would help them. He never hurt their feelings. He would not speak an ill-word even to bad people. He would say:

"I do not want to be a curser"[1002].

Mawlana Khalid was an endless ocean in terms of knowledge and wisdom. Despite this, he was very humble before his teachers and his friends, and he would act as if he did not have knowledge about a matter which he in fact did, thereby preserving himself from pride and arrogance[1003]. He was a perfect model for the scholars who wished to act upon their knowledge. He would never take the easy way out in worship.

He was content. He would not waste his time but use it in the best way. He was a man to be praised in his every state, a model personality.

Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi sent each of his students that he trained to perfection to a different country. Thus he saw a great service in spreading the blessed teachings of the *sharia*, *tariqa*, *haqiqa* and *marifah* everywhere.

1000. Ibn Abidin, *ibid,* p. 323-324.
1001. Ibrahim Fasih, *ibid,* p. 155.
1002. Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 233, 270.
1003. Ibn Abidin, *ibid,* p. 319; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p 207.

By the grace of Allah he would bring life back to the dead hearts, bringing about in them a spiritual spring. Countless people would come from distant lands aspiring to be his student. Through the blessings of his guidance the inclinations of the heart towards this world would be eliminated.

The glance of Mawlana Khalid was very powerful and effective. One day, by the grace of Allah and the inspiration He placed in his heart, as he was walking down a path he came eye to eye with a Christian. At that moment the Christian was overcome by a spiritual trance and weeping he began to pursue Mawlana Khalid. In the excitement that comes from this guidance he entered his house and left as a Muslim. The joy and light in his heart was reflected on his face[1004].

Khalid Baghdadi would strive to instil in the hearts of people, the pleasure that comes from *marifatullah* and *muhabatullah*. The following lines illustrate well this state of his:

"My heart is in flames, my chest is burning, I run from street to street and door to door!

I strive to make sure that nobody remains unaware of my Beloved and my land"[1005].

In a letter his teacher Abdullah Dahlawi wrote about Khalid Baghdadi to some Rumelian scholars, he writes of his spiritual worth and degree as follows:

"I praise Allah Most High and I invoke peace and blessings upon His Messenger. O respectful, virtuous scholars of the blessed land of Rumeli, and its precious statesmen, commanders, rulers and precious believing brothers! Know that Mawlana Khalid –may Allah give him health and safety- the possessor of all inner and outer virtues and excellence came to me upon a spiritual unveiling he received. He embarked upon the Naqshiband-Mujaddidi path and advanced through the degrees of *dhikr* in silence and solitude, *muraqaba*, *rabita* and completed all of the duties of this path. Through the grace of Allah, Most High, and the providence of our great ancestors, he has reached a state

1004. Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p 233.
1005. M. As'ad Efendi, *Divan-i As'ad,* p. 111.

of constant *dhikr*, wakefulness, humility, profit, spiritual quality and secret truths...

When he reached this state and rank we bestowed on him permission and authority to guide the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)... His hand is my hand, seeing him is seeing me, loving him is loving me, hating him is hating me, and denying him is denying me...My request and wish from you is that you show him respect and reverence. What befalls me is to ask for good for him and to pray that he be given long life and protection from all harm and hardship.

It is said in a hadith:

"The best of people are those who are of benefit to others" (Bayhaqi, *Shuab,* VI, 117; Ibn Hajar, *Matalib,* I, 264).

Know that it is a great bounty for you to have such a great guide in your land. Know it compulsory for you to love him, befriend him, and abide by his rights and etiquette.

The state of *ihsan* is the spirit of this religion. Glory be to Allah! It is through the presence and company of Mawlana Khalid that you can attain this rank. Through it also it will be easy for you direct yourself to the hereafter and turn away from the carnal desires of this world.

I know of no other period of tasawwuf in which could be found such spiritual prosperity. This necessitates that we support him and protect him, and benefit from him by being in his presence in sincerity and love. Just as out of all his students, Imam Rabbani had a special place for Muhammad Baqi Billah, so too, out of all my students, Mawlana Khalid has a special place in my heart. I praise and thank Allah over and over again..."[1006]

The peak of humility

As Khalid Baghdadi advanced in his spiritual state, and he drew ever nearer to Allah, he became even more humble. He constantly took stock of his heart, and was in a constant state of wakefulness to avoid remaining heedless of Allah and moving away from Him. He was never content with his nafs and

1006. Abdullah Dahlawi, *ibid,* p. 217-220, no: 109.

never sure of its end state. He never saw himself safe from the punishment of Allah, and never abandoned his servanthood to his Lord[1007].

One time someone asked him to expel a man from the *tariqa*. Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote him the following letter:

"O my brother! Whenever I see a sinning believer I always think that he is better than I. Because his faith is known to all and his sin is hidden from me. However the evil of my own *nafs* is clear to me. It is unknown who will be saved at the last breath. There have been many sinners and misguided people who have become perfected saints later. There have been many righteous people with *wara'*, who have fallen to the lowest of the low. I ask for soundness of faith for me, for you and for all of the Muslims. In short, it is not possible for me to expel from this path a person who I consider to be more virtuous than myself"[1008].

In practically every letter he asked for a prayer that he be able to pass away with faith and that he reflect Islam in his life in the best manner. Some examples of this are as follows:

"…My request of you is this, that you remember me in your prayers and that you pray that I meet my Lord with a good end-affair and that I am able to follow the Sunnah of the Best of Creation (peace and blessings be upon him)"[1009].

"…This is my request from your beautiful character and your honourable nature; that you do not forget to pray for me that I am able to remain upright in the direction of the Sunnah and that I die upon the pure religion of Islam[1010].

"...Do not insist on my replying to your letters...Because I try to reply to people's letters but I am pulled back from doing many other acts of good. Whoever loves me should pray that I am able to follow the Sunnah and that my end affair is good. I too pray for them in the same way. There is no need to correspond this through writing"[1011].

1007. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 120.
1008. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 120-121, no: 16.
1009. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 128, no: 18.
1010. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 141, no: 29.
1011. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 246, no: 85.

Khalid Baghdadi never forgot his weaknesses and his faults, and would be aware of them every instant. He would say that people should abandon finding excuses for their mistakes and faults in the way of servanthood, admit their weaknesses and seek forgiveness for them. He expressed this in one of his poems:

"Yesterday my mind criticised me saying: O sinner, you have become quite embarrassed due to the mistakes you have made" (*Divan*, Bayt: 284).

"The struggle between me and my mind continued until the morning. It continued to censure me while I continued to put forth my excuses." (*Divan*, Bayt: 286).

"Finally I begged my mind saying: O mind, which sees all details and subtleties. Since you do not accept my excuses, then what should I do?

It said: You should say: "I am at fault, I admit my mistakes, I am powerless, ashamed and in shock..." (*Divan*, Bayt: 291-292).

"No righteous deed has ever been produced by me. My sins, however, are so great they cannot be enumerated".

I am ashamed of my evil deeds. I have no act of worship done with sincerity, nor the tongue to put forth my excuse" (*Divan*, Bayt: 1085-1086).

"What a shame that I have spent my life on unnecessary and disordered tasks. What a shame I never remember the Day of Judgement or the hereafter".

Wretched me, I am building a foundation based on the desires of my nafs. Shame on me that the foundation of the palace of my deeds will be very weak" (*Divan*, Bayt: 704-705).

Thus, that great ocean of knowledge and wisdom felt with his entire being the nothingness of his existence in the face of Divine Majesty. He was thus able to delve into the horizons of eternity and attained a spiritual richness that was ever increasing and an unattainable rank in the sight of Allah.

His Death

When a terrible plague hit Damascus, Mawlana Khalid (may Allah have mercy on him) did not want to leave the city. He read to the people certain hadith about those who die from plague becoming martyrs. At that point someone came to him and begged him saying:

"Sir! Pray that I do not get affected by the plague".

He prayed for him and this person did not get struck by the plague.

He was then told:

"Sir, please pray for yourself" He replied:

"I would be ashamed to not want to meet my Lord"[1012].

First his son Bahauddin, then Abdurrahman fell ill with the plague and died. When burying them Mawlana Khalid felt his own journey to be near. He told his students to prepare his grave and informed them of where he wished to be buried.

His students were a little hesitant to obey his command due to their sadness and pain at being separated from him. Seeing this Mawlana Khalid called Shaykh Abdulqadir to him and said:

1012. We should note that every believer should beg their Lord for his own cure and for those of other ill people and be a means for their cure. This atttitude of Khalid Baghdadi's shows his own unique spiritual rank. In fact this state is a reflection of the character of the prophets. The prophet Ayyub experienced many intense trials and one of them was that his body succombed to a serious illness. Through this illness that lasted for years, prophet Ayyub never once complained or wailed about his state. His wife said to him:

"You are a prophet, your prayers are accepted. Pray to Allah so that He can cure you". That dearest of prophets replied:

"Allah gave me eighty years of health and my illness has not yet reached eighty years. I have only been ill for a few years. I would be embarassed to seek health from my Lord".

That is, the prophets and the awliya in their attitude to Allah do so out of a desire to be close to Him, and this state of adab is particular to them. It would be wrong for such people who have not reached such a rank, in their heart to try to display such an attitude. Moreover such a claim, which is mixed with ostentation, will be merely that, an artificial and insincere claim. This is why we should always remember that the words and actions that arise from certain Friends of Allah are particular to their rank and state. Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi warns us of heedlessly imitating such high spiritual states and stations:

"*Firstly note whether or not you have the state of Ibrahim within you! Because the fire will recognise and not burn only those like Ibrahim, who submitted completely to Allah"*

"Make sure you dig my grave today. When you begin to do so you will find a rock that is hard to break. If you wait to dig it after I die, you may not be able to prepare my grave in time". His command was then obeyed immediately.

One day Mawlana Khalid said to Shaykh Ismail Ghazzi:

"I have donated all my books".

That day he had accepted visitors who had come to offer their condolences for the death of his second son Abdurrahman. After the visitors left, he said to Ismail Efendi:

"Stay with me today". Then he continued:

"If I did not fear that the people would say "Mawlana Khalid is displaying wonders, I would farewell all of my loved ones and friends. I think that this Friday night will be the night I set out for my journey".

At that point he looked at the meal that was brought to him and said:

"I will not eat this nor any other food. Have you ever seen one who eats and at the same time desires death?"[1013]

Ibn Abidin narrates:

"I was in the presence of my master Khalid Baghdadi to offer my condolences for the death of his son. I saw his radiant face smiling as he said to me:

"I praise Allah that instead of sorrow in my heart for this painful event, I find praise and contentment".

Then I went to see him again on Tuesday and said:

"Sir, for two nights now I have been seeing in my dream that Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) passed away and I was praying his funeral prayer".

"I am the son of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him)..."

"It was as if it was he who was intended in this dream".

1013. Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 258-268.

Ibn Abidin was then very sorry that he spoke of this dream and was filled with sorrow[1014].

Just like Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Mawlana Khalid also met death as if it was his 'wedding night' (*shab'i arus*) and advised those around him as follows:

"I have donated a third of my wealth, my lands, and even my house to go to a good cause...Let my inheritors build a water cistern near my grave as an act of charity. Let them place over my grave, and that of my children, my relatives and my successors, signs that do not contain expressions of reverence or titles. For instance let them write something like this: 'This is the grave of the Naqshiband mujaddid, the son of the son of such and such, ever in need of the mercy of his Generous Protector'. In addition, let them pay a thousand liras from my wealth in order to compensate for any missed prayers.

The livelihood for my poor disciples will be provided for by this third share. Prepare food for them. Do not neglect to pray in the madrasah and I would like a Khatm-i Khwajan *dhikr* performed there".

Beware of describing my personal virtues after I have gone or of crying and wailing so that you do not cause pain to my spirit. Write letters everywhere warning them of being saddened by my death and crying over me. I would like those who are able to and who were loyal in their love for me to sacrifice an animal and send the reward for it to me. I do not say like some spiritually drunken people say: "I have no need of charity being sent in my name or of the reciting of the Qur'an after me". On the contrary I am in great need of the Fatiha and Ikhlas.

Look with favour upon me and may all of my disciples throughout all the lands forgive me.

May you all be united and in a state of harmony. Abandon egoism and discord. Perform righteous deeds that will brighten my eye in the grave".

He then went to the *harem* (private quarters of the house) and took his ablution. He performed two rakats of prayer and then said: 'Now I have caught the plague". He turned to Allah and occupied himself with *dhikr*, *muraqaba* and supplication (*munajat*). He was not heard to cry or moan

1014. Ibn Abidin, *ibid,* p. 324; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 271.

despite his intense pain. In fact the signs of *dhikr* could be seen in all of his limbs and even in his hair. When the adhan began to be called he responded to the *muedhdhin* saying '*Allahu Haqqun*' four times.

He then recited the following verse:

"O self at rest and at peace,

return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased!

Enter among My slaves!

Enter My Garden' (Fajr, 89:27-30)

After that he gave up his blessed spirit in a state of great pleasure to his Lord as a martyr. It was Friday, the 13th of Dhu al Qada, 1242. May Allah be pleased with him! And may we be subject to his intercession.

As he left the world, everyone's heart be they near or far, practically melted. All around could be heard sounds of crying and sobbing. There was not one believer who knew him and did not cry for him out of his sorrow. He was buried at Nur hill on the skirts of the Qasiyun Mountains in Damascus. This place is now known as Salihiya[1015].

At his funeral there were so many people; such a crowd had never been seen before. His funeral prayer was led by his student Ibn Abidin (may Allah have mercy on them both) the great Hanafi scholar.

As Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi was being placed in his grave a very pleasant scent came from his blessed corpse and spread out to soothe the spirit. Every one present there smelt this scent. Some visitors to his tomb from the people of spirituality say that this scent can still be smelled to this day.

The blessings and aspirations of Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi, the crown of the Friends of Allah, and the sultan of the scholars and Gnostics, are still present.

O my Lord! Give us and all of our brothers in religion a share of the spiritual state of Mawlana Khalid who strove day and night with sincerity, taqwa, love and knowledge of You in order to serve this religion as is its worth.

Amen...

1015. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 259-263, no: 96; Hasan Shukru, *ibid,* p. 272-278.

His words of wisdom

• "The scholars of the *sharia* and the people of witnessing have agreed upon this truth that a person who loves his own *nafs*, who despises others and believes himself to be more pious than others, is one of the worst of grave sinners"[1016].

• "Know this, that in reality this world is like a fleeting shadow and a veil that comes between the servant and his Lord. The one who harbours even an atom's worth of love for this world cannot be a true servant. The one who does not cast out of his heart the world, with its shell and its core, is not accepted"[1017].

• "…The goodness of the rulers and the viziers affects the good of all people. May Allah adorn you with their beautiful state. In the same way if they are spoiled then the people become spoiled. May Allah protect you from that vile state. The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to pray for everyone in general. There is no doubt that it is the habit of the Sufis, even if it is not conveyed, to take extreme care in praying for viziers of noble nature, for all of the Muslims"[1018].

• "I advise you to do much *dhikr*, to seek refuge in Allah constantly, to turn your face away from the deceiving adornments of this world, and to vie much for the eternal hereafter, to remember death and the loneliness of the grave, to prepare for the Day of Account and enter into the Divine Presence, to adhere to the Sunnah of the prophet, to turn away from vile innovations, to pray that Islam is victorious and that the apostates and enemies of religion are left with no one to help them"[1019].

• "In all of your acts and words, abandon your own strength and power and clutch onto the power and strength of Allah"[1020].

• "For every *wird* there is a *warid* (an inspiration that comes to the heart)"[1021].

1016. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 117, no: 13.
1017. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 119, no: 15.
1018. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 188, no: 54.
1019. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 195, no: 59.
1020. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 228, no: 73.
1021. As'ad Sahib, *ibid,* p. 228, no: 73.

• "Benefitting from the people of spirituality, the Gnostics who are cognizant of the divine mysteries, and even from the prophets is dependent on three conditions:

- Sincerity

- Etiquette or manners and

- Harbouring love for the people of Allah.

Prosperity and blessings can only come from the friends of Allah. If there is no sincerity in the heart of a disciple or there is an act which is disrespectful to the masters, the hearts of the Friends of Allah will not incline towards him.

Love is a cause for the increase in these blessings. The more a person has these three things the more blessings he will receive"[1022].

• In explaining the famous 'Jibril hadith', where the angel Jibril comes to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), sitting knee to knee with him, Khalid Baghdadi says the following:

"Even though for Jibril to sit like this seems contrary to *adab*, this state of his teaches us three important matters:

- It is not right to be embarrassed in seeking knowledge of the religion,

- Pride and conceit do not befit the teacher,

- With this affair Jibril taught the Companions that everyone should ask about the matters of the religion, freely and without embarrassment. One should not be embarrassed in learning and teaching the religion and in abiding by the rights of Allah, Most High"[1023].

• "How can a person honoured with Islam spend the entire night in sleep and not preserve the trust of Allah Most High? One of the important trusts of Almighty Allah is to rise before the dawn and stand in prayer"[1024].

1022. Khalid Baghdadi, *Risale-i Khalidiya,* p. 2-3.
1023. Kemahli Feyzullah, *ibid,* p. 12.
1024. Hani, *Hadaiq*, p. 697.

31. Sayyid Taha al-Haqqari

(May Allah have mercy on him) [v. 1853]

Sayyid Taha al-Haqqari was from the lineage of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and a grandson of Sayyid Abdulqadir Gilani (may Allah have mercy on them both). His father is Sayyid Molla Ahmad ibn Salih Gilani Efendi. He is known by such elevated titles as ***Shihabuddin*** (the shining light of the religion), ***Imaduddin*** (the pillar of the religion), ***Qutbu al-Irshad wa al Madar*** (the pole of guidance) and ***Sayyid Buzurgh*** (the Great Sayyid).

He began his studies memorising the Qur'an at a young age. He studied outer sciences such as tafsir and hadith with the great scholars of Sulaymaniye, Kirkuk, Iraq, Arbil and Baghdad. He also studied the science and literature of the day.

His uncle Sayyid Abdullah Shamdini was the colleague of Khalid Baghdadi. They were like brothers. On the one hand they were learning the outer sciences and at the same time they were looking for a perfected guide to teach them the practices of the sciences of the heart. This is why when Khalid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) returned from India Sayyid Abdullah immediately went to visit him.

When he saw the knowledge and perfection obtained by Mawlana Khalid, his love and admiration for him increased even more and he immediately affiliated himself with him. He became one of his leading disciples. A little while later he was given permission to train other disciples.

One day Sayyid Abdullah mentioned the extraordinary capacity of his brother's son Sayyid Taha al Haqqari to Khalid Baghdadi. Mawlana Khalid told him to bring him on his next visit.

Mawlana Khalid took great care in the training and development of Sayyid Taha. In a short time Taha al-Haqqari gained an elevated character and spiritual state. A short time later he was given successorship.

When Khalid Baghdadi sent Taha al-Haqqari to Berdesur with the responsibility of guiding the people there, he sent him off with a great crowd. As he mounted his horse he took hold of the stirrups and when Taha al-Haqqari tried to prevent him from doing so, his teacher said:

"I wish to hold your stirrups out of my love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his blessed family. Please do not stop me from doing so".

After walking for a short time together like this with Mawlana Khalid holding the reins, they stopped. He handed over the reins to Taha al-Haqqari and said:

"From now on the reins are in your hands. You have progressed and passed many stages on the spiritual path. May Almighty Allah be your helper, and the *himmah* of our great men be your refuge".

When his father passed away a short time later, Taha al-Haqqari went to the town of Nahri where his uncle had been guiding the people and continued his efforts. For forty two years he taught knowledge and wisdom and dispersed blessings to the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) there.

Many people near and far came like moths to gather around this source of light and guidance. His service extended from the Caucasus to Iraq, from Syria to Egypt, from Iran to Anatolia and the Balkans. In fact, in the year 1853 when the war between the Ottomans and the Russians broke out, the great Sufi *mujahid* Shaykh Shamil from Daghistan and Taha al-Haqqari and his brother Shaykh Salih motivated the people of Haqqari and Azerbaijan to fight against the Russian army.

In addition Sayyid Taha went out to help an Ottoman unit fighting against the Russian army with a large army of volunteer soldiers[1025].

His virtues

Taha al-Haqqari would mostly perform the *tahajjud* prayer in his home and sometimes in his own masjid. He would always pray the *kushluk* prayer in the mosque. He would do the rounds of the *madrasas* every day checking the education received by his students and solving any difficult issues of the teachers.

The town of Nahri was like an ant mound and would fill up and overflow with righteous people and students. There was not a moment day or night when that blessed place was not filled with *dhikr*, *tafakkur*, *ibadah* nor was there a single moment spent in disobedience. Food would be served to the poor and visitors to the lodge. The Naqshi dhikr known as the *hatm-i khwajagan*, would be completed after the asr prayer and then they would read from Imam Rabbani's *Maktubat*. They would eat before the evening, and they gave great importance to reviving *maghrib* and '*isha* with *dhikr*, contemplation, and worship.

Sayyid Taha was a perfected guide, with dignity, majesty and great compassion. However, from time to time he would joke around with his students.

Taha al-Haqqari would not neglect any of his students and would look after each and every one of them. He would immediately try to help one of them if they had a problem.

He placed great importance on visiting relatives and would meet the needs of the needy. He would not meet with ignorant statesmen upon the advice of his teacher but would write to them in order to obtain the needs of some of the poorer Muslims.

His love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and for his blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) was great. There is a mountain in the east of Shamdinli close to the border of Iraq. During the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Companions came

1025. Salih Ucan, *The holy words of the Naqshibandi Shaykhs,* p. 69, Huzur Yayınevi, İstanbul 1983.

here for conquest and some of them were martyred at this mountain. From that time on this mountain has been known as Mount Shahidan (Mountain of the Martyrs). Sayyid Taha would visit Mount Shahidan twice a year and honour the spirits of the Companions there.

Sayyid Taha would rush to serve the people anyway they needed. One time he decided to build a mill in the south of the town of Nehri. He personally prepared the plan and project himself, and together with his students, carried stones on his back at every stage of its formation. After working for days, the mill was finally complete. It was made so fine and with such order that when wheat was placed in the receptacle it would immediately begin to work by itself and stop when there was no more wheat left in the receptacle. Those who saw this were in amazement of Sayyid Taha's intelligence and genius.

Correspondence with his teacher

One time **Khalid Baghdadi** wrote the following to Sayyid Taha (may Allah have mercy on them both):

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful...

May the peace and mercy of our generous and bounteous Lord be upon you! May my Lord give you a share of His wisdom and favour you with His grace. He is the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

I was honoured to receive your letter. I prayed to my Lord to answer your prayers. I hope Almighty Allah favours us, accepts my prayer and bestows upon us what we wish. I expect that you will do the same, due to your elevated compassion.

All of my friends here desire your help for their salvation. In particular, Sayyid Abdulqadir Barzanji and Hajja Musa request that you pray for the soundness of their faith. You are indeed a person of compassion and favour.

I too request from you and from our *faqih* brother Abdulqadir, to pray that Allah give me, this poor, forlorn, guilty and sorrowful brother of yours, success in following His true path. Pray that Almighty Allah make us occupy ourselves with seeking His pleasure, that He distance our hearts from everything other than Him, and that he does not deprive us of the bounties of Paradise, those that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of and no one has

ever imagined or thought of on account of the worthless and petty benefits of this world"[1026].

Mawlana Khalid writes in one of his letters:

"My dear Sayyid Taha! Be under the safety of Allah, Most High. Shun with intensity the calamity of fame. The fact that you have a great number of students may bring about a state of pride. This state is a great tribulation. May Allah, Most High, protect you from this calamity. Amen"

Know that to incline towards oppressive rulers is fatal poison that dries up the spirit. You must distance yourself from them, and from using a sweet and compromising tongue or from acts that will bring you in their favour but also humiliate you. By the will of Allah you will not be with these oppressive rulers. Do not accept their invitation even if they invite you. The response to be given to such an invitation is as follows:

"We are dervishes. Our concern is to minimise our connection with the world, and also pray for the Muslim ruler who serves our religion. We do not know the required etiquette suitable for the ceremonies of the Sultans so please excuse us".

My dear Sayyid Taha! Comply with these matters that I speak of and pass on my greetings of peace to Molla Mustafa Esnevi. What I have written is also applicable to him. We must distance ourselves from places of sedition and mischief and settle ourselves where we can serve the religion. Please do not hide anything from us for such an act could lead to spiritual ruin.

The weakest of servants Khalid Naqshibandi Mujaddidi"[1027].

In another letter he wrote:

"May Allah, Most High, honour the beloved of my heart, Sayyid Taha, with reaching the states of *fana* and *baqa*! I received your letter stating your devotion to me with the bond of love and sincerity. We are extremely pleased at the news of your serving the elevated Naqshiband path and you completing a reading of the Holy Qur'an in a beautiful way. On the condition of sincerity, the reward for those who worship Allah, who follow the Sunnah of the

1026. As'ad Sahib, *Bughyat al Wajid,* p. 265-266, no: 97.
1027. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* XI, 411.

prophet because you were a means for them, and whatever act they do, will be written in your book of deeds. The following hadith is clear evidence for this:

"For the one who initiates a 'good practice or custom, there is a reward. And the reward of those who follow him is also given to him without their reward being decreased in any way..." (Muslim Zakat, 69).

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah, Most High, be upon you".

From the weakest of servants Khalid Naqshiband"[1028].

Whenever an important matter arose Taha Haqqari would write to his teacher Khalid Baghdadi and he would reply. Students would also travel back and forth between them and so they were always in contact.

Taha Haqqari also guided his *murids* and *khalifas* through his letters.

In one of his letters he writes:

"...Love for the dervishes is capital for the happiness of this world and the hereafter. One must preserve these two things:

1. Following the Owner of the Sharia, the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him),

2. Love and sincerity towards the teacher that one follows.

When these two conditions are met; whatever is given is a bounty and whatever is not given is not a source of sorrow, it will be given eventually. Allah forbid, if these two conditions are lacking but the spiritual state and pleasures received continues then one should know that these states are deception and *istidraj* and one should see them as leading to ruin.

This is the straight path. Almighty Allah is the one who gives success in all affairs. With peace and prayer from the weakest of servants Sayyid Taha al-Khalidi-an Naqshibandi"[1029].

Taha Haqqari (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 1269 (1853AD) in Nehri near the town of Shamdinli, in Haqqari. His

1028. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya,* XI, 412.
1029. Too see a copy of this hand-written letter refer to AbdurrahmanMemish, *Khalid Baghdadi,* p, 388

tomb is there. The charming little town of Nehri, which had a population of 16000 during the Ottoman period, is now known as Baglar.

Words of wisdom

• "The benefit of those who embark upon this elevated path, will reach their mothers and their fathers and their ancestors"[1030].

• "Do not bury your deeds in the ground. A person who is satisfied with himself is like one who nullifies his deeds by burying them in the grave. There is nothing other than '*ujb* (being proud of oneself) which ruins one's deeds"[1031].

• "Flee from those who reject the friends of Allah and from the people of innovation as you would flee from a lion. The heart of the one who eats the food of the denier will be dead towards *dhikr* for forty days. If these deniers had been present at the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) they would not have believed in him"[1032].

• "The one who has sincerity and love and performs an act in accordance with the sharia is undoubtedly a friend of Allah even though he may not have performed any wonders. As for the one who does not have sincerity, love for Allah, or any righteous deeds, even if he does perform some wonders, then know that this is not a wonder but deception *(istidraj)*. May Allah protect us all from falling to this state"[1033].

• Sayyid Taha gave the following explanation about this hadith:

"A rakat of prayer performed after brushing with the siwak stick is better than 70 rakats without having brushed" (Ahmad, VI, 272).

"The word '*siwak'* used in the hadith has the meanings of brushing with the siwak stick but also has another meaning which is 'no one but you'. In this case we can understand the following meaning from this hadith:

1030. See Salih Ucan, *ibid,* p. 163, 108, 118, 121, 231, 257.
1031. See Salih Ucan, *ibid,* p 156.
1032. See Salih Ucan, *ibid,* p 44.
1033. See Salih Ucan, *ibid,* p. 300.

"One rakat of the prayer of the one who abandons himself and all worldly things in order to turn towards his Lord and feel himself in His presence is better than 70 rakats prayed in heedlessness"[1034].

1034. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 202.

32. Taha al-Hariri

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1803 - 1875]

Taha al Hariri (may Allah have mercy on him)was born in the hijri year 1220 (1803 AD) in the town of Harir in Arbil, in the province of Mosul. He began his first education in Arbil. He memorised the Holy Qur'an. He studied in the madrasas of Baghdad where he received his *ijazah* at a high level.

After completing the outer sciences he began to serve and enter under the auspices of the *khalifah* of Khalid Baghdadi in Arbil, Hidayetullah Efendi. Hidayetullah Efendi was the grandfather of As'ad Efendi.

Taha al-Hariri later saw the great shaykh of the time, Sayyid Taha al-Haqqari, in his dream, and then visited him in person and in a short time was given *ijaza* by his shaykh.

Taha al-Hariri received very good training, and was respected and honoured and spent approximately forty years in the regions of Arbil and Mosul guiding the people there. As was the practice of his own shaykh, he too used to read and expound upon the *Maktubat* of Imam Rabbani, during his *suhbah*.

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The pole of his time, Taha al-Hariri (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away in the hijri year 1292 (1875 AD). His tomb is in Harir[1035].

Close to his death Taha al-Hariri announced that he would appoint Muhammad As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on them both) as his *khal-*

1035. M. As'ad Arbili, *Risale-i As'adiyya,* p. 7.

ifa. As'ad Efendi requested that he give this important duty to his teacher's son. Shaykh Taha responded:

"My son is here as long as I am, and when I am gone he is also no longer. I am giving you this trust because you are worthy of it".

It so happened that just as he said, Taha al-Hariri's son passed away six months after him. Muhammad As'ad Efendi then continued the task of guiding the people[1036].

Words of Wisdom

• "The state of the traveller who is of the people of unveilings as opposed to the traveller whose *kashf* is closed, is like the journey of two people to the Hijaz, one who can see and who cannot. Each of them is nearing their destination throughout their journey. However the reward of the one who cannot see is greater. The traveller on the *sayr u suluq*, who does not have any *kashf*, is in a constant state of progress, however much this cannot be seen, and so is more profitable than the one whose *kashf* is open"[1037].

• Muhammad As'ad Efendi has said:

"My teacher Shaykh Taha al-Hariri said that animals worship Allah more than human beings do"[1038].

1036. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 205-208.
1037. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 208.
1038. Carl Vett, *Memoirs from The Kalami Dergah,* p. 237.

33. Muhammad As'ad Arbili

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1847 - 1931]

Muhammad As'ad Arbil (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the town of Arbil in the province of Mosul in the hijri year 1264 (1847AD). His father was Muhammad Said Efendi, the shaykh of the Khalidi dervish lodge in Arbil. His grandfather was Hidayetullah Efendi, the *khalifa* of Khalid Baghdadi. He is a sayyid from both his mother's and his father's side[1039].

As'ad Efendi completed his studies of the outer sciences at a young age. Since his father had passed away he was not able to get his guidance from him so he affiliated himself with Taha al-Hariri (may Allah have mercy on them both). A year later he graduated from the course for teaching those who wish to join the order. Five years later he began to guide the people from sitting in the position of his teacher who gave him the command to do so.

In 1875 when As'ad Efendi received his *ijaza*, he went to the Hijaz to perform hajj. While he was at hajj he learned of his shaykh's death, and he returned to Istanbul. Appreciative dervishes who saw the perfection of his state began to gather around him. When, along with many others, Hoca Yekta Efendi, one of the teachers who used to teach at the Bayazid mosque, noticed his perfect knowledge in the lessons he gave at the Fatih Mosque, they affiliated themselves with him.

News of the superior knowledge, wisdom and virtue of As'ad Efendi began to spread around Istanbul in a short time, and the son-in-law of Sultan

1039. Husayin Vassaf, *Safina-yi Awliya,* Suleymaniye Library Written Donations Bl., No: 2306, II, 191; Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, "M. As'ad Arbili", *Friends of Allah from the time of the Companions to our time*, İstanbul 1996, IX, 369.

Abdulhamid II, Khalid Pasha, invited him to the palace and studied Arabic and the religious sciences under him for one and a half years.

As'ad Efendi had received his *ijaza* from the Naqshibandiyya but also had an *ijaza* from Abdulhamid Birifkani of the Qadiri tariqa. He was later appointed to the Kalami Dergah where he continued his guidance. Many of the scholars of Fatih and others affiliated themselves with him and attended his *suhbah* and circles of *dhikr*. Among these were those who considered joining a Sufi order to be deviant. As they continued to study under As'ad Efendi they abandoned such bigoted ideas and became sincere followers[1040].

Those who frequented the lodge were scholars, leading reciters of the Qur'an, teachers at the mosque, generals, leading rulers, officers, intellectuals and people from all classes of society. High ranking officers, officials and wealthy people sat side by side with the poor and needy in their ragged clothes in a state of true brotherhood.

Seeing the knowledge and spiritual competence of As'ad Efendi, Sultan Abdulhamid Han appointed him to be a member of the *Majlis-i Mashayikh*[1041]. As'ad Efendi was appointed as the head of this *majlis* during the time of Sultan Mehmed Rashad. Winning the love of Sultan Rashad, As'ad Efendi was sent to hajj as the '*surra emini'*[1042].

As'ad Efendi's efforts and struggles to guide and educate the people were great. He sent his *khulafa* to the furthest corners of Istanbul and other cities in order to reach and serve a greater number of people.

In addition to his activities at the Kelami Dergah, he would also be active in other dergahs. This is why he had students all over Anatolia, and his influence reached as far as Bosnia and Albania.

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1040. Husayin Vassaf, *ibid* II, 192; Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 210-211; *DİA*, XI, 348.
1041. **Majlis-i Mashayikh:** This was an institution established in 1866 to inspect the lodges and their regulatory affairs and was connected to the Shaykhulislam.
1042. **Surra Emini**: This was the official who was sent to the Haramayn every year and who was given the responsibility of the 'Surra Humayun'. This was an extremely honourable duty and was given to high-ranking officials of the military and bureaucracy, who were known for their religiousness and uprightness.

As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was a precious friend of Allah. He always had a smile on his face and a sweet tongue and was dignified and honourable. His most distinguishing feature was the humility, modesty, compassion and grace which could also be seen in his own works.

He never saw any existence of its own within himself. He had become enveloped in a state of nothingness and burned with love for Allah and the desire to be reunited with Him. He would address people with compassion and kindness and would always use terms of politeness and courtesy.

As'ad Efendi had a wealth of culture, both physical and spiritual. He was competent in all of the Islamic sciences. He had adorned his spirit with great and elevated virtues. He was also skilled in literature. His poems and verses about divine love were extremely deep. Let us give an example of a poem written for the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon you) from his Diwan, which consists of poems in four languages:

My Beloved! The spring that fell in love with you is burning in order for Your beauty to become manifest and appear.

The rose is on fire, the nightingale, the hyacinth and even the earth and the thorn are on fire out of their love for you...

It is the bright light of that blessed face of yours that like the Sun has burned all lovers...This is why the heart is on fire and even these two eyes that cry out of love for you are on fire...

Why be amazed that the heart and body glow and burn out of love and longing for your beautiful face! O my Beloved, come and see the fire that is in my heart!

Is it possible to wash the martyr of love who is burning as such? For the body, the shroud and even fresh water are on fire!

I have abandoned the desire of my heart to be in ease and comfort. For ease is being on fire and pain; fleeing and staying are on fire!"

"My Sultan! Whatever I do, I cannot please this sorrowful heart of mine. For worry is on fire, the one who worries with me is on fire, and even joy is on fire.

Can As’ad hope for ease and peace from his Beloved whilst that rose-faced beautiful Beloved emits the fire of love from his eyes?

As we can see from this example the poems and letters of As’ad Efendi are filled with the expressions from a burning heart. These burning cries that sound out of his sorrowful heart are like an embodied example and a voice of reflection of the words of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, who said: ‘I was raw, then cooked, then I burned’.

When the Ottoman Empire came to an end and the Republic was formed, the Sufi lodges were closed and as a result As’ad Efendi decided not to go out into the streets and retreated to his home in Erenkoy.

Having devoted his life to the service of Allah and guiding others, As’ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was poisoned as a result of the severe oppression he was subjected to, and he was martyred at the age of 84 on the eve of March 4, 1931.

It was as if As’ad Efendi gave news of what was to befall him and his own martyrdom in the following lines he penned:

It is not possible to wash the martyr of love with so much fire. The body, the shroud and even fresh water is on fire.

May Almighty Allah allow us to be the subjects of his intercession! Amen!

It is only the true Friends of Allah who continue in their guidance after their fleeting life is over. They continue their spiritual life in the hearts of the believers, via their works, their letters, their poems, and most important of all, the perfected people they have trained and guided.

One of the most important heirlooms that As’ad Efendi has left for us are the precious warnings, guidance and words of wisdom found in his letters. We would like to present to you some parts of his *Maktubat*, which contain his letters of guidance and counsel which give life to the hearts.

Sincerity

"Almighty Allah, who best knows the unknown, expects that the human soul carries out worship in its outer form together with the quality of true spirituality and servanthood in the deepest and most heartfelt manner"[1043].

"Receiving benefit from and progressing along the Sufi path is not dependent only on the amount of *dhikr* and *awrad* done. It is obvious to those who are competent, that sincerity of the heart and genuine love has a great impact... Those who do not obey Almighty Allah and the sinners, who give no regard to the rulings of the sharia, will never, at any time and in no place, be amongst the people whom the friends of Allah favour and direct their spiritual help towards"[1044].

"As is known, sincerity and love come at the head of those virtues that lead to spiritual progress. Eternal bliss and salvation are the fruits of the tree of sincerity and love"[1045].

"This poor brother of yours is yet striving to complete the essence of faith. I am striving to utter the *kalima-i tawhid* with my tongue and with my state. It is difficult to state '*La ilaha illallah'* as long as there is – in the words of the Sufis – an idol, or a beloved present in one's heart other than Almighty Allah. Even if it is uttered it is doubtful that it will be accepted or a means of reunion with Allah"[1046].

"In a hadith it is stated that "*the one who says* 'لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ' *will enter Paradise"* but there is another version in which the word *'mukhlisan'* that is 'with sincerity' is mentioned[1047]. It is of vital importance to purify one's heart of diseases such as ostentation, pride, envy, greed and selfishness and purify one's intentions.

We all know that while there is a disease in the human body in regard to one's stomach and gall bladder, one cannot receive pleasure from even the most delicious foods nor can one receive any benefit. In the same way, when

1043. M. As'ad Efendi, *Maktubat,* p. 46, no: 19.
1044. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 58, no: 30.
1045. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 59, no: 31.
1046. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 63, no: 35.
1047. Tabarani, *Kabir*, V, 197. "When asked 'What is this sincerity?" the prophet responded: "To protect oneself from that which Allah has prohibited" (Tabarani, Awsat, II, 56).

there is one of the above-mentioned diseases in the heart, or more than one in particular, then outer forms of worship will be of no use in ensuring the pleasure of Allah and His contentment. Allah, Most High, says in the Qur'an: **'Beware! It is to God alone that all sincere faith, worship, and obedience are due'** (Zumar, 39:3). May Allah bestow upon us that state of sincere servanthood and worship! Amen!"[1048]

Imam Zuhri, one of the great scholars from the Tabi'een was asked about the following hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him): "*Whoever says* «لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ» *will enter Paradise"*. He replied:

"This ruling was given during the first period of Islam, before the revelation of the obligatory acts, and the commands and prohibitions of the religion" (Tirmidhi, Iman, 17/2638).

That is, it is essential to apply all of the rulings of the Book and the Sunnah after one has perfected one's religion.

Anxiety about the future

As'ad Efendi drew attention to the real future, which is eternal life or the hereafter, saying:

"Is there any individual amongst the human race, who is distinguished from other creature through his intelligence and his wisdom, who does not wish to meet with success and strive to guarantee his future? Indeed, there is not. But those who do not perceive the true future that is those who do not regard the grave as being the first step on the journey to the hereafter are many indeed. This is my request from my brothers in religion:

1- Let them compare the degrees of importance of the life of this world, which will last for a maximum of one hundred years, to the life of the hereafter, whose infinity cannot be imagined.

2- Just as everyone accepts the truth that in order to obtain worldly peace and attain one's needs, one needs to spend freely of one's life and one's wealth, so too the following is true:

1048. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 150, no: 122.

Let them consider that just as it is proven with solid proofs like the verse **'Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for Paradise…'** (Tawbah, 9:111), happiness in the hereafter and eternal salvation can be obtained by taking great care to follow the standards of the elevated sharia and the tariq and obeying all commands in regards to one's life and property.

3- Consider the following verse which addresses the people of faith, **"O you who believe...Safeguard yourselves and your families (by obeying your Creator's commands and prohibitions) from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones (by giving yourselves and your family good character and training)**' (Tahrim, 66:6) and consider its importance and take stock of your actions!

There is no doubt that there is no superfluous expression in the Holy Qur'an, the words of the All-Knowing and Wise One. He never commands something which is not absolutely essential.

Everyone knows that there is no possibility of unnecessary talk emerging from people of wisdom and knowledge famous for their literary nature.

May Allah bestow on us knowledge of the hereafter so that, without seeing the darkness of the grave, we perceive the necessity of lighting it up, just as He has given us worldly intelligence, which forces us to buy coal before the intense winter arrives. May He protect us from regret that is futile after death arrives! Amen!"[1049].

"The term '*temin-i istikbal*', used amongst the people of perfection, which has the meaning of securing one's future, must not indicate those things which complete our limited life in this fleeting world. It is clear that wise people who see reality for what it is, will understand from the term 'istikbal', that is the future, that the greatest aim is the life of the hereafter in which everyone will be taken to account for their own actions.

Thus, if there is an instant in which we are sorry about the time we wasted from this capital of our life, then it should be the instant that we are distant from *dhikr* and *tafakkur*, which guarantee our future. May Almighty Allah prevent you and me from being of those who wasted their time in heedlessness

1049. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 6-7, no: 2.

and who later felt great regret! May He accept us amongst those righteous slaves who are mentioned in the hadith *'When My servant remembers Me, (know that) I am with him*" (Bukhari, Tawheed, 15). Amen!"[1050]

"What answer will we have to give when Allah, Most High, the Owner of all of the visible and invisible realms, takes us servants to account on the Day saying:

"O My servant! With what nerve did you have to perform a deed which I had forbidden, when your life and your death, your elevation and your falling, your ease and your distress, your health and well-being, in short your every breath, are all in My power?

With what mind did you obey the accursed Satan, the enemy of your salvation and happiness? O My servant! Did you think that I would not see or hear? Or did you consider the shame and respect shown necessarily for a weak servant like yourself to be unnecessary to be shown to Me? When we hear words like these, how can we defend ourselves? By taking help from the super intelligence of a philosopher or the deep legal knowledge of a lawyer? Shame and alas!"[1051].

In one of his letters As'ad Efendi wrote a poem which had the following meaning:

"Your capital in this world is a mere shroud! And I fear that you may or may not be able to take even that!"[1052].

Dhikr

As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) advised his spiritual children of being in a constant state of *dhikr*, saying:

"May Almighty Allah illuminate the eye of your heart! Just as there is rose water present in every point of a rose petal, so too may He beautify every atom of your precious body with the pleasant fragrance of love and constant *dhikr*. Amen!"

1050. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 55, no: 27.
1051. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 64-65, no: 36.
1052. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 61, no: 33.

Just as Almighty Allah is not unaware of His servants for even a second, He greatly loves those of His servants who never forget Him for an instant by always acting in line with the noble shariah. This is why it is my humble wish that we do not be deprived of this elevated honour. Let us not enter Almighty Allah's presence with a heart infatuated with carnal desires..."[1053].

"Just as all of our subtle centres (*lataif*) are in need of being purified, it is vital that a traveller on the path of truth needs to ensure that all of his subtle centres are accustomed to performing *dhikr*.

Just as a person has to clean every part of his body, including every point, when he needs to perform the major ritual ablution (*ghusul*) so too, the one who wishes to purify his heart, needs to perform *dhikr* with all of his faculties, in fact with every atom in his body"[1054].

"Whoever wishes to serve others and to advance in the degrees of this service need only serve Almighty Allah! Let him deem all other than Him useless, dead and harmful. It is at that point that he will have expressed in truth the statement of 'La ilaha illallah' and lived it in his deeds. As you know the honourable name 'Allah' gathers within it in all of the Beautiful Names and it is a special name for His elevated Being. In that case, saying '*La ilaha illallah'* means the following: "There is none other than Allah who bestows bounties, who protects, who gives sustenance... and so on". Accordingly then, the human being needs to revive his heart with this honourable *dhikr* in order to become a perfect believer, and take care in etching this elevated word upon his heart"[1055].

"The times revived by *dhikr* and contemplation are causes of ease, peace, calm, prosperity and a spiritual atmosphere for a nation, hence we should pray for the health and well-being of Sufis so they can carry out this duty. This is why it is natural that I strive to carry out, by His grace, this pure and chaste duty, as long as He gives me life"[1056].

1053. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 100, no: 69.
1054. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 140, no: 112.
1055. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 146, no: 118.
1056. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 62, no: 34.

Tafakkur (Contemplation)

As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would advise others to contemplate on the Divine wonders of the universe and take heed from them.

Some examples of his *tafakkur* are as follows:

"How elevated is Almighty Allah who created a clot of blood from a zygote, who created bones from the clot of blood, who dressed those bones in flesh, who gave the human being the most beautiful of forms by completing his human limbs and breathing into him the spirit, thereby, giving him life.

Almighty Allah has appointed two compassionate servants, the mother and father, of the tiny baby who has no power to do anything other than cry. He offers the baby a sweet and pleasant nourishment such as the mother's milk, which needs no water, no fire, no oil, no salt and no time to prepare. He grows that baby in his own special way and with a new manifestation. How generous an Artist is Almighty Allah who does all of this in the most perfect way!

We should ponder on all of the endless bounties that He has bestowed on us and be grateful for them – our food, our clothing, our decorations, our family, our humanity, our Islam, and civilisation.

In the darkness of the grave and the arena of the Final Gathering, in the turmoil of those people crowded together, there will be no one other than Almighty Allah from whom we expect help and no other Master will we have"[1057].

"Shaykh Sadi said it beautifully:

"The clouds, the wind, the Moon and the Sun are constantly working in the skies for you. In that case do not eat even a piece of bread given to you in heedlessness".

We must strive to reflect and thank Allah Almighty for His countless bounties, who holds the clouds, the rain, the wind, the Moon and the Sun under His command, and who sustains mankind's livelihood and wellbeing through their effects. May our Lord make us all from amongst such righteous

1057. See M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 45-46, no: 19.

servants! Amen! And may He not make us from amongst those ungrateful slaves who do not appreciate the table of bounties and grace of such a Benefactor"[1058].

"What other kind of benefactor can we imagine in this world who favours us in the best way by creating from nothing, our bodies, our limbs, our health and wellbeing, and our food? Which commander – even if it is only a corporal superior to a private soldier - would leave his soldier unpunished and forgive him even though he disobeyed his command time and time again? We are under the command of Almighty Allah, with His names of *al-Ghaffar* as well as His name of *al-Qahhar,* and we take shelter in a corner of His kingdom and consume daily from His table of provision. In that case, it is essential that we obey His commands, in accordance with our intelligence, our wisdom and our conscience, and carry out our duty of servanthood to Him. We do not know what will happen on the Day of Judgement. O Allah, make it easy for us and do not make it difficult for us!"[1059]

"I like only one aspect of old age. And that is this: many times it occurs to me that time has run out and the date of my journey from this world has arrived. It may be acceptable for you to have worked hard for this world up until, but now what will happen to you? Will you be young again? Wake up! Prepare for the day when you will have to respond to the divine command of "Irji'i" 'Come back to Me".

When one thinks about such things the *nafs* is incapable of defending itself and cannot find a reasonable response. May Almighty Allah protect us all! May He save us from heedlessness! Amen!"[1060]

"Just as reflecting upon death lightens the sorrow of the calamities that befall us, so too it also makes easy for us our own death. It decreases our love for this world, which only drives us to pain and unsettles us.

Love for and extreme desire for the fleeting property, position and beauties of this world is the main cause of all manner of sin and discomfort. May

1058. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 53-54, no: 26.
1059. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 69, no: 39.
1060. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 128, no: 99.

Almighty Allah purify our hearts of such carnal loves. May He make our hearts places of *dhikr* and love of Him! Amen!"[1061].

First abandon what is haram

The friends of Allah advice those who wished to enter the training of tasawwuf to first of all abide by Allah's commands and prohibitions, and live according to the Book and the Sunnah, and only then would they give permission for them to enter the Sufi path. As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) also declared that everything else is connected to this condition. He wrote in one of his letters:

"There are two important reasons for why in the hadith we are told to abandon what is *haram* first and then perform righteous deeds:

1) 'Repulsion of harm comes before acquiring benefit'

(That is, to distance oneself from what causes harm is more important and takes priority over attaining what is beneficial. It is not possible to advance spiritually without living the *sharia*).

2) It is beyond the strength of a person to be able to perform all worship and obey every command. However it is possible for every individual to avoid the prohibited – because they are few in number – and the benefit of this is more comprehensive.

In fact, I can say the most important way of progressing along the Sufi path is to abandon sins. Proof of what we say is that, since it is in the nature of the angels that they do not sin, they do not advance in rank because they are thus deprived of the reward of abandoning sin.

In short, just as abandoning sin serves to advance one spiritually one should also not distance oneself from physical benefit and good. It is not possible to make up for the harm caused to one's property, life, honour and dignity that comes from disregarding what is forbidden. This is a truth that is accepted by those with discernment"[1062].

1061. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 141, no: 113.
1062. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p.. 37, no: 12.

"(The matters advised in tasawwuf, such as *dhikr*, *tafakkur*, *suhbah*, are like prescriptions that allow one to advance spiritually. If there is something that prevents this medicine from taking effect, then one should go on a spiritual diet and make sure to shun what is not needed).

Some of these are as follows:

1) Acts that are in opposition to the sharia,

2) Love for certain adornments and decorative items which amount to extravagance and waste,

3) Friendship with the people of heedlessness and gloom"[1063].

Salat

As'ad Efendi had the following to say about the importance of performing salat with reverence and presence:

"It would be beneficial for the person who wishes to perform salat, or who wishes to attain divine prosperity and be honoured by entering His presence, to think about the following personified example. There is an ancient Arabian custom: Whenever an Arab enters the presence of one of his elders, in the hope of making a request of him, he first of all greets him and then begins to praise and laud him, and say that he is proud to be from his clan. Finally, he makes known his need and makes his request. If the one who performs the *salat*, conjures up such a scene, and performs his prayer with this analogy in mind, then this will undoubtedly help him perform his prayer properly"[1064].

That is the person must realise in whose presence they are standing when they pray and they must then strive to perform their salat in a state of awe, supplication and seeking refuge.

The Holy Qur'an states:

'O Allah! You alone do we worship and from you alone do we seek help' (Fatiha, 1:5).

1063. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 70, no: 40.
1064. M. As'ad Efendi, *Translation of the Noble Fatiha,* p. 2-3.

Let us not disregard this verse which is an indication that in order for the servant to gain the right to ask, he must first of all perform his duty of servanthood"[1065].

"The one who performs salat must present the *tahiyyah*, which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) presented to Almighty Allah, in his own name. We should not read this prayer as if we are relating the words of the prophet. We must read the *salam* sent by Almighty Allah, the response given by the prophet, and the *kalima-i shahada* given by the angel Gabriel as if we were stating these ourselves"[1066].

Which people are honourable?

"Almighty Allah states: ' **We have honoured the sons of Adam...'** (Isra, 17:70). What is it about the son of Adam that makes him noble? Is it the physical matter, that is the body created from dirt and water? Or is it the species of mankind which is distinguished from all other creatures by its ability to talk? Of course it is none of these.

Those who are excessive in their unlawful attempts to bring about the lowly desires of their wild *nafs*, who disregard the sharia and trample on the Sufi path, and who are slaves to their *nafs* can never be honourable. In the sight of the people of wisdom and conscience, these people are considered completely ignorant.

As for the sons of Adam who are worthy of being called honourable ('*mukarram'*), and who adorn their inner and outer selves with beautiful character by purifying their *nafs'*, who serve the sharia and who are competent in the *tariqah* - they are the happiest and most fortunate of people"[1067].

1065. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 6.
1066. M. Es'ad Efendi, *Mektûbât,* s. 33, no: 10.
1067. M. Es'ad Efendi, *a.g.e,* s. 3, no: 1.

Humility

Some of the wise sayings of As'ad Efendi in regard to humility, modesty and wretchedness in one's servitude to Allah are as follows:

"As is known amongst the acts of the slave, the most worthy of being accepted is that of humility. That is, a person should know that they are a weak, lowly and powerless creature and that whatever they possess belongs to Allah and is bestowed on them by His grace. Prostrating, bowing down on the ground, and becoming one with the earth, are all embodied representations of this humility. In addition to this, a person says '*Subhana Rabbi al'ala'* with his tongue, that is, he absolves Allah of all deficient traits, who is superior to all others in terms of strength, power, property and kingdom"[1068].

"Ubaydullah Ahrar, one of the great shaykhs of the Naqshibandiyya tariq considered the prayers of his brothers in religion and righteous servants that he encountered to be a treasure.

"He never relied upon his own deeds or worship in order to attract the mercy or pleasure of Allah. As necessitated by the verse: '**I only created jinn and man to worship Me'** (Dhariyat, 51:56) **deeds and worship can only allow a person to be freed of the rebellion of their *nafs* and they cannot claim anything more than this**! He would always hope for precious means such as prosperity from the prayers of good by others, and the turning of Allah's *wali* servants towards him"[1069].

"In response to the many great divine bounties such as faith, intelligence, wisdom, our physical body and spiritual faculties, which we cannot estimate in their value, the human being, deficient, and incapable of thanking Allah enough, cannot rise spiritually unless he considers himself as guilty, a sinner and he feels embarrassed. That is, he cannot be an acceptable person in the sight of Allah. As long as he continues to be unaware of the fact that his entire existence is a trust from Allah, his faith in *tawheed*, that is, in the oneness of the Necessarily Existent One, can never be complete, and he can never be freed of shirk"[1070].

1068. M. As'ad Efendi, *Maktubat,* p. 31, no: 10.
1069. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 118-119, no: 89.
1070. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 121, no: 92.

The following words of As'ad Efendi which express his own feelings of nothingness before Allah and his humility are worthy of noting:

"Whenever I compare myself to any of the creatures of the universe or to any particle within it, I always find myself below them. I cannot prefer myself even over a sinless weak ant. However, Almighty Allah shows me to be greater than I am in order that my precious brothers receive benefit. This is His will. This is why I praise Almighty Allah. In order to influence those lovers, He creates many frets, melodies and beautiful sounds from the flute, which has no merit of its own. He has power over all things. May Allah give us a good end affair. May He not show our own *nafs* to be great when we are in need of Him for our every breath! (May He not make us forget that all bounties are a divine favour from Him). May He protect us from the heedlessness of giving a share to our own *nafs*. Amen!

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would supplicate to Allah as follows:

"O Allah! Make me a servant who is very grateful and very patient! Make me appear little in my own eyes, but great in the eyes of others (so that I can influence and benefit them)" (Haysami, X, 181)"[1071].

"I would like to make a request for myself. I have been asking Allah for one month now to bestow perfect faith upon me first of all, and then upon my brothers. This is why I am in need of your prayers. Maybe then I can be successful. When I look at certain signs, I see that I am in intense need of perfect faith. Please explain the situation to any brothers that you meet. Let them not be heedless... Praise be to Allah that He has shown us our faults and not left us in a state of jahl-murakkaba, that is one who does not know that he does not know. 'That is Allah's favour which He gives to those He wills' (Hadid, 57:21)"[1072]

"One of the sins, in fact, the first sin that leads to the deprivation of the servant in the sight of Allah, is to see an independent existence in oneself, that is egoism" [1073].

"It is doubtful that prayers which are made with the pride of the *nafs*, relying upon one's strength and power, will be accepted. However if a prayer

1071. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 122, no: 93.
1072. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 130, no: 101.
1073. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 138, no: 110.

coincides with a time when the heart feels broken, and one admits the incapacity of one's *nafs* and one's own need, the hope for its being accepted is increased. May Allah make our *nafs al ammara* ever abased and worried, but our heart and spirit overcome and happy with love of Him. Amen!"[1074].

As'ad Efendi wrote the following lines in the 42nd letter:

"My Lord! The person who attributes to himself superior traits, capacities and skills and who relies upon his own nafs cannot attain Your Grace (For in this lies the danger of conceit, arrogance and pride). In order to attract Your mercy, favour and grace, the human being has no other choice but to admit his own nothingness and powerlessness".

True Love

On the matter of divine love, As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) had the following to say:

"Even though it appears that there is no human being who cannot claim to love the perfect beauty of Allah, it is hard to prove this. Many people have deceived themselves in this matter. If a person wishes to learn the meaning of love let him look at how he treats his own wealth and children. How much time does he spend in thinking about them, never letting them out of his mind, sacrificing everything for them, applying to them for every need, and he abandons comfort and peace of mind in order to obtain them! This is how love should be but a great portion of it should be directed to Almighty Allah. This is because He is the Enduring One, He is the One who gives us everything we have, who provides for us, and who nourishes and educates us.

The Holy Qur'an states:

'...If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them…' (Ibrahim, 14:34)

The effort put into everything other than Allah is lost and sometimes even brings harm. In the least it is temporary, it will leave quickly"[1075].

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

1074. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 158, no: 130.
1075. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 67-68, no: 38.

'Allah has not allotted to any man two hearts within his breast…' (Ahzab, 33:4).

That is, Almighty Allah has not given man two hearts, so that he uses one to love Allah and one to love everything other than Allah. The heart, which is where love resides, is one. If the heart becomes attached to one of these, the other loses its importance. This is why a believer with perfect faith who experiences tasawwuf is always required to remember Almighty Allah in his heart, even if his tasks are many"[1076].

My ummah, my ummah...

As'ad Efendi made serving others the axis of his life. He struggled for the physical and spiritual salvation of the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and encouraged the believers so. One time he said:

"May Almighty Allah make your honourable hearts the dwellings of love and residences of prosperity and blessings! May your love spread to the brothers who you converse with. Those who only think of themselves and are worried only about their own salvation are not worthy of being the heirs of the prophets.

Those who follow the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), who, on the Day of Judgement, will cry out "*My ummah, my ummah*" not having any concern for himself, and striving only for the salvation of the servants of al-Rahman, strive to come nearer to Allah by being a good example for others with their entire being, and behind those who they address (by constantly encouraging and guiding them to the truth, to good and to piety). They never incline towards worldly preoccupations that are an obstacle to worship and obedience to Allah. They live independent on all others in a constant state of felicity on account of their reliance on Allah"[1077].

Shukur, or gratitude, is not merely saying "O my Lord, I thank you". On the contrary, it is to use all of the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon us in accordance with the purpose they were created for. The most acceptable form

1076. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 71, no: 41.
1077. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 91-92, no: 60.

of gratitude is those acts of social worship and service that are beneficial to one's fellow believers"[1078].

Beware of the wiles of the *nafs*

As'ad Efendi said that one could never be safe from the wiles of one's *nafs*, and one needed to be in a state of constant striving against it. He wrote in several of his letters as follows:

"It has been said that "*He who knows his nafs knows his Lord"*. The follower should not trust in the times when he is overcome with love of Allah and when he sees his *nafs* reformed during one of his teacher's talks or in any of the beautiful states that he witnesses in himself. Such beautiful states of perfection are shadow states that come about as a reflection and are not real. In order for these states to be real and to manifest themselves completely, one needs further struggle and efforts to abide by all of Almighty Allah's commands and prohibitions"[1079]. This poor brother of yours can never be satisfied that he has any acceptable deed in the sight of Allah... **I can never feel safe from the tricks and wiles of my *nafs***. May Almighty Allah bestow on all of us true *iman* and *ihsan* so that our faith is not mere form only (May Allah enable us to live our faith with good character also!) Amen"[1080].

"May Allah make your spirits dominate and enable you to eliminate the desires of your *nafs*. May he make your intelligence, which is connected to your heart, dominate and defeat your satan"[1081].

In accordance with the rule that "**The real free person is the one who is the commander (and not the slave) of his *nafs*",** may Almighty Allah make us commanders over our *nafs al ammara* (evil-commanding souls) and attain the state of the *nafs al mutmainna* (contented nafs). May He make us worthy of the beautiful address: **'Enter among My slaves! Enter My Garden'** (al Fajr, 89:29-30)"1082.

1078. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 67, no: 38.
1079. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 84-85, no: 54.
1080. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 104, no: 73.
1081. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 80, no: 49.
1082. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 43, no: 17.

Don't be deceived by this world

As'ad Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him), who saw this world as a precious bounty bestowed upon us in order for us to gain the happiness of the hereafter, said:

"When tenants move from one house to another they take all of their belongings and leave nothing behind of what they love. This being the case, how strange it is then that when they enter the house of their grave, where they are in need of everything they are not able to take even a part of their treasured belongings"[1083].

"Our time in this world is limited, and does not deserve such importance. However, it is precious because it is the tillage of the hereafter..." A worldly life that has been given to us in order to gain the pleasure of Almighty Allah is esteemable and it is acceptable in the sight of Allah"[1084].

"We must abandon vain worldly pre-occupations that are beyond what is absolutely necessary and needed. Running after fleeting and impermanent worldly delusions is like running after a shadow. It is never possible to catch it. If a person spends their precious life in this way, they will have deceived themselves. For when they are required to respond to the majestic command of 'Return to your Lord', they will see that all of their efforts were in vain and that they have no provision for the grave, which is their true homeland. Those who strive in the way of the Lord of all the worlds, with the purpose of attaining eternal happiness, will have gained both. Almighty Allah gives from the world in accordance with one's intention for the hereafter. May Allah, Most High, protect us from wasting our time on vain tasks! May He allow us to spend all of our efforts and aspiration in the way of attaining eternal happiness! Amen!"[1085].

As'ad Efendi added to the ode of Shamsuddin Sivasi the meaning of which is below:

"Beware, that by running after position and rank, you forget your Creator, who knows your every state! Rush to serve others, and do not forget

1083. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 16, no: 5.
1084. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 103, no: 72.
1085. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 111-112, no: 82.

Allah! Do not be deceived by the crowns and thrones of this world, and its ranks and stations, and forget the pit at the end that is the grave! O heedless one, come to your senses and do not forget the sudden migration, that is death that comes all of a sudden! The path to death is frightening, so do not ignore this path!

"O my eye! Do not look at the world and be deceived by its attractions, adornments and beauties. They will eventually throw your body and your spirit into the prison of tribulations. There is no trace of the pleasure of eternity in the pleasures of this fleeting world. Do not be deceived by this world which pleases you today with a momentary 'Oh!' Do not forget that its pain will cause you to say 'Alas' (That is, do not turn your hereafter into a source of endless pain for the sake of transient loves and momentary pleasures"[1086].

How can the community of Islam progress?

As'ad Efendi gave the following example to explain how the Muslims can advance once more:

"Those who examine the pages of history will openly see that the Arab peoples were made up of many different tribes and clans. Before they were honoured with Islam and enlightened by the light of the Qur'an, there was hatred, animosity, and spite rife amongst them and the bloody feuds and battles of the period of ignorance continued amongst them.

Moreover they were struggling with poverty and need and they were extremely dejected. It was only when the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) illuminated the dark horizons with the bright light of prophethood that the oppression and ignorance was cleansed with the clear waters of *marifah*. When such an exhausted and dishevelled community took as their guide the Holy Verses, and took as their principles the hadith, spite and animosity gave way to love and devotion, primitiveness became civilised and their poverty was transformed into comfort and peace. By establishing the foundations of justice in this way, they spread the lights of civilisation throughout the world. This was so much so that they were able to raze to the ground the empires of Persia and Rome, which were known by the entire

1086. M. As'ad Efendi, *Divan,* p. 198.

world for their greatness and power. In a very short time their conquest reached the borders of Asia and the south of Europe. They caused the East and the West to bow to their commands and left them in awe of their justice and grace. In this way, they elevated the blessed Name of Almighty Allah. They raised the happiness of man and the peace of the community from the lowest level to the highest of states.

Most of them embraced trading, some took up a trade, some occupied themselves with agriculture, and a portion entered the professions of scribe or medicine. Each of them served humanity in this way. By making firm the building of brotherhood, they established the foundations of true civilisation. They advanced to such a degree that through their loyalty and their justice they were able to attain true happiness and salvation, surpassing all over non-Muslim communities. May Allah increase their rewards a thousand times over! Amen!

Now at an unbelievably fast rate, this is a time of decline and regression. As a result the hearts are shaken up. Their markets have been dragged to bankruptcy. What a shame! How and where did that progress, which advanced at the speed of lightning, go? What a shame! What happened to that tremendous rise so that this fall at the speed of lightning occurred? What will come of it? Research shows that there are major differences between these two peak points. I see that the feet of those who research this endless loss, are crippled, and the fields of the specialists are quite narrow.

Almighty Allah says: '...**If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet firm'** (Muhammad, 47:7)

I will repeat that if we want the nation of Islam to rise up and the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) to be elevated, this can only be achieved by submitting to the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the All-Knowing and the Allam, and by embracing the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him).

A community that made the sharia of Islam dominate in various lands, and the enlightened *tariqah*, which protected its thoughts and ideas, will achieve their aim just as the pilgrims are reunited with the Ka'bah, whilst pronouncing 'Labbayk' ('At your service').

They will be subject to endless happiness just like those who attain that great happiness at the Bayt al Haram. In this way they will have taken their share from the verses that command unity and cooperation. The following saying supports this: "A nation comes about through unity, whilst lawlessness and anarchy come about through dissension and discord".

Now I pray to Almighty Allah, the One of Absolute Power, and The Ruler, Who governs all things, great and small, that He allows these wishes of mine to reach those insightful and discerning brothers of mine so that our prosperity and blessings can increase. May unity and cooperation and solidarity be established amongst the Muslims. May the foundations of togetherness and unity amongst friends be firmly laid down. In this way, may the nearness and cooperation of the believers allow the influence and soundness amongst them to continue for a long time"[1087].

Words of Wisdom

• "Faith, which is removed from good deeds and worship, and saying in tongue only that one believes, is patently not sufficient to save the person"[1088].

Almighty Allah says: **'Do people imagine that they will be left to say, 'We have faith,' and will not be tested? We tested those before them so that Allah would know the truthful and would know the liars'** (Ankabut, 29:2,3)**.**

• "Our spiritual faculties, which came down from their original and elevated stations and entered the lowly body and which are worthy of being raised once more to the peak of *tajarrud*, can only advance by continual *murakaba*"[1089].

• "*Khushu* can be obtained by continuing one's *dhikr* and *tafakkur*"[1090].

• "There can be no greater means imaginable than sincerity and love nor no virtue such as serving the needy that will allow one to be subject to the great favours and grace of Almighty Allah"[1091].

1087. M. As'ad Efendi, *Maktubat,* p. 176-178, no: 142.
1088. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 13, no: 4.
1089. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 42-43, no: 17.
1090. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 95-96, no: 64.
1091. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p.. 77, no: 47.

• "The knowledge that is acceptable to Almighty Allah is the knowledge that is practiced and applied in doing good deeds"[1092].

• "The only thing needed by man is to make himself beloved to Almighty Allah, the One of Absolute Power. Once the person attains the state of love, it is natural that they will then be granted worldly and otherworldly favours"[1093].

• "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was patient and enduring of the pain caused by others to him. His community should be the same"[1094].

• "In order to adorn our outer, we need to follow the sensitive and pure *shariah* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). To clean our hearts we need to follow the Sufi methods which are but principles laid down by Him"[1095].

• "The spiritual path (*tariqah*) is the journey of worship travelled with the aim of coming nearer to Allah"[1096].

• "Whatever the particular tariq may be, the essence and foundation of all of them is the pure sharia. If one's words and actions are not in accord with the sharia then it is impossible to receive benefit from the tariqat. Such a person is like an ill person who does not listen or follow the advice of the doctor"[1097].

• "The sparks of the fire of anger burn up the harvest of peace and destroy the entire harvest. This is why no intelligent person would indulge in anger..."

One must swallow one's anger in order to be freed of the sicknesses of the heart, even though it be more bitter than the poison of a snake..."[1098].

Almighty Allah says:

"...**those (people of taqwa) who give in times of both ease and hardship, those who control their rage and pardon other people – Allah loves the good-doers** (Al'i Imran, 3:134)].

1092. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 95, no: 64.
1093. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 145, no: 117.
1094. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 129, no: 101.
1095. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 86, no: 55.
1096. M. As'ad Efendi, *al Risala,* p. 4.
1097. M. As'ad Efendi, *Maktubat,* p. 159, no: 132.
1098. M. As'ad Efendi, *Divan,* p. 72.

• "Do not be concerned if you are censured for being on the path of Allah. What is the sting of the bee for the one who collects honey?"[1099]

• "One does not fear the thorns in the garden of love. I gather hundreds of rose buds for every thorn"[1100].

• "I take pleasure from the pain of the garden of the dervishes. If I make my pillow a pillow of thorns then I see the Rose in my dream"[1101].

• "If you become a slave to love of gold and silver, then your worth will fall lower than copper. Even if you are like iron, with no value, or a black stone or piece of marble, if you have reached the people of the heart, then you will become a jewel"[1102].

• "The greatest aim is the happiness and salvation of the hereafter. Even the one, who lives for a thousand years and comes to possess many treasures, will perceive their life in this world as a mere dream after death. If he has not been successful in building and illuminating his eternal home, he will be constantly weeping and wailing, squalling in great regret. May Allah give us complete faith and success in building our eternal home! And may He not allow us even one atom of love for this world. Amen"[1103].

The chain of the tariq of the elevated Naqshibandiyya[1104]

Praise and thanks be to the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He placed within it Ahmad Mukhtar (the chosen prophet) (peace and blessings be upon him) to be the light of guidance for all the worlds.

And also the likes of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Salman Farisi, Qasim ibn Muhammad and Ja'far as Sadiq, and the guide to the spiritual path, Bayazid Bistami also spread the truth.

Abu al Hasan Haraqani is a noble man, Abu Ali Farmadi is a spring of grace and the elevated Yusuf Hamdani is the commander of the army of *asfiya*.

1099. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 95.
1100. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 94.
1101. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 96.
1102. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 109.
1103. From an unpublished letter by M. As'ad As'ad Efendi written to Commander Bahriya Adhan Efendi.
1104. This Noble Chain of the Naqshi order was written by As'ad Efendi.

Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghujduwani became the master of Arif Riwgari and Mahmud Anjirfaghnawi. Shaykh Ali Ramitani, Muhammad Baba Semasi and Amir Kulal illuminated the world.

Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshiband, the heir of the throne of tasawwuf and the shah of the worlds, made Alauddin Attar a guide to the people.

Khwaja Yaqub Charkhi and Ubaydullah Ahrar became their successors with Muhammad Zahid who became a spiritual pleasure and joy to the world.

Dervish Muhammad Samarqand and Khwaja Muhammad Imkanagi are the lights of marifah. Through Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah the spiritual world found permanence.

With the mujaddid Imam Rabbani Ahmad Faruqi and Muhammad Masum, the strong chain, became the light for the spiritual elevatation of Shaykh Sayfuddin and Sayyid Nur

Shah Mazhar Jan-e Janaan is the master of Shah Abdullah Dahlawi. The hearts of the travellers became pure light through Khalid Baghdadi.

After Sayyid Taha al Haqqari, the one of elevated lineage, our saint Taha al Hariri became the Pole of the awliya.

We too would like to seek refuge in the dergah of those sayyids. O Allah, forgive Your slave As’ad and his brothers in religion...!

34. Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1892-1984]

Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in the district of Tepebag in Adana. His family tree goes back to Khalid ibn Walid through the line of Nureddin Shahid who was from the family of Ramazanoglu. His father was Mujtaba Efendi.

The following anecdote is narrated:

One day Khidr went to the door of their house and told the maid to call the honourable mother of Sami Efendi to the door. His mother told her to give him whatever he wants, but he was insistent saying:

"No, I must see her myself". She was thus compelled to ask from behind the door:

"Yes, what is it?" Khidr gave her the following good news:

"My daughter, do you know that you are pregnant? A great person will come into this world through you. He will have a large mole on the left rib bone, and he will serve Islam for a long period. During this time be extremely careful about the *haram* and the *halal*; and when he is born give him the name 'Mahmud Sami'. He then asked for a shirt. By the time the shirt was brought to him, he had disappeared.

❁

Mahmud Sami Efendi completed his primary and secondary education in his hometown of Adana. He then went to Istanbul for his higher education. He

enrolled at the Dar al Funun (Istanbul University) in the department of Law. He was a very successful student. The beauty and radiance in his face, the courtesy and civility in his manners, and his superior success in his lessons awarded the acknowledgement of his teachers.

While continuing his education, his house in Sariyer was flooded and a portion of his books were lost in the flood. Accustomed, from a young age, to looking upon every event with wisdom and thus taking heed, he concluded that this was a divine warning and interpreted it as meaning that he was not going to continue in this field. He finished his university degree with distinctions, but anxious about infringing on other's rights, he decided to earn his livelihood by keeping the books at a business place and not by practising law.

After completing his higher education, he wished to return to Adana. One day he met a friend of Allah in the Bayazid square. This man asked him where he was from and what he was doing in Istanbul. When Sami Efendi told him, the man asked:

"Would you allow me to start you on a new education?"

He then took him to the Kelami Dergah in Koca Mustafa Pasha. They conversed along the way and the *wali* said to him:

"My son! This education of the material sciences that you have received is not sufficient. I advise you to study that science which will bring you the happiness of both worlds. The first lesson of this school of wisdom that you will begin, is 'do not offend anyone' and the last lesson is 'never be offended by anyone'....That is, whatever happens, always look upon the creation of Allah with the eye of compassion and never ever be hurt by what anyone says or does. This is to reach the peak of being able to forgive others..."

The *murshid* of the lodge at that time, the Head of the Assembly of Shaykhs of the time, As'ad Efendi, paid close attention to Sami Efendi:

"My son! We need to begin treatment wherever the illness is. The most important organ we have is our heart... This is why we will begin to revive our hearts before performing supererogatory worship. We must give great importance to the *dhikr* of the heart!" Thus a new life began for Sami Efendi. From then on, Sami Efendi was a young man of service at the lodge. He would tidy the garden, organise the shoes, order the incoming visitors, serve them,

and reply to the letters that came to his Master. Even the oldest *murids* in the lodge admired him. He would sleep little. He would make the beds at night and go to sleep at the same time as everyone then once everyone was asleep, he would wake silently, renew his ablutions, and sit on his prayer mat and occupy himself for a long period with *tasbih*, *tahlil*, *dhikrullah*, and *tafakkur*. He would bring wood from the garden before the pre-dawn and light the fire; he would let anyone who needed to take their major ritual ablution know that their hot water was ready[1105].

Aside from these important tasks at the lodge, it would always be the young Sami Efendi who would rush to perform any task that needed to be carried out. It was Sami Efendi who would help the old disciples and the sick brothers with complete devotion. Amongst the disciples of As'ad Efendi was Huseyin Efendi, the Chief Judge (*mufti)* of Cide who was very advanced spiritually. Being very old the *mufti* fell ill and it had become extremely difficult to take care of him. When the lodge requested that he be sent to his hometown, to his children, Sami Efendi objected and said:

"If you allow me I would like to take up the care and service of this blessed man". He did in fact carry out this service with great courtesy and sensitivity.

In response to this sincere intention and polite service he was subject to the following prayer of the *mufti*:

"O Allah! Just as you have bestowed on me spiritual bounties and favours, please bestow them in the same way on this young son of ours..."[1106].

As a result of the sincere service provided by Sami Efendi at the lodge and his serious efforts in the path of tasawwuf he reached a state of spiritual perfection and became a favoured student of his teacher. When he went to his hometown of Adana, As'ad Efendi wished for his return to Istanbul without delay. He informed him of this in a letter filled with love and longing:

"My honoured son!"

1105. Sadiq Dana, *Sultan al Arifin as Shaykh Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu,* p. 73.
1106. See Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *The Golden Chain,* p. 231.

My desire and longing are pushing the limits of my patience and forbearance and I would be very pleased if you make this old man, who cannot bear the intensity of winter, happy with that beautiful countenance of yours.

You have undoubtedly heard of the wise words of Shah Naqshiband who said that 'Our path is through *suhbah'*. Before the freshness of the spring of your youth turns into the autumn of old age, it is my one desire and hope that you scent and beautify your heart and spirit with the prosperous flowers of this elevated *tariqah*. May Allah give you success..."[1107].

Returning to Istanbul upon this polite invitation of his teacher, Sami Efendi then spent the rest of his days sometimes with his father, Mujtaba Efendi, in Adana, and sometimes at the Kelami Dergah perfecting himself.

Ijazah

Having closely followed the success reached by Sami Efendi at the dergah in such a short time, As'ad Efendi presented him with his *ijaza* and gave him his successorship. With this *ijazah,* As'ad Efendi was at the same time describing Sami Efendi. This is how he saw him:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. Peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, on his family and Companions.

After this: let me express the following to my brothers in religion, and the people of loyalty and strong faith: My child, Sami Efendi, who carries this ijazatname, spent his days of youth in the pure circle of salvation of our religion, and served this great Naqshibandi path, striving with his entire might in this way, thus putting forth his seriousness to this end. In addition, he applied the methods of the Khwajagan masters and strove to purify and cleanse his faculties.

Praise be to Allah, his success in this and his entire state can be seen in his face. Divine grace has manifested itself openly in his spiritual faculties (lataif). I saw that his desire for togetherness with Allah was sound and faithful, and his aspiration to benefit from the fruits of the tree of tawheed

1107. M. As'ad Efendi, *Maktubat*, p. 52-53, no: 25.

to be very high. In addition to all of this, I saw him adorn his being and his attributes by continuing in muraqaba and nafy u isbat for a period of time.

This is why I have given him ijaza (permission) to teach the adab and rules of this path, and train those of our brothers who wish to enter upon this Naqshibandi way, for those who wish to drink of the sweet waters of this spring of happiness.

Almighty Allah says:

'Allah commands you to return to their owners the things you hold in trust …' (Nisa, 4:58)

I entreat Allah that He increases his enthusiasm, joy, and pleasure in carrying out the rulings of this enlightened tariqah and this pure sharia! And that He allows him to benefit from the words and states of the people of tawheed. Amen!

Let me say to my precious brothers who know and follow the ruling of the following verse **'…(there are such among men who are)…not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah…** *(Nur, 24:37), that if they wish to purify their heart and refine their nafs, or more correctly, benefit from the chain of the Naqshibandiyya, then let them continue attending the suhbah of and keeping company with Sami Efendi, and comply with the adab that he talks of with great care and undoubtedly they will attain their desire…* **'That is not difficult for Allah'** (Ibrahim, 14:20).

Protecting oneself from sins and finding the strength to obey Allah is only possible through Allah Most High's help.

May Allah send His Peace and blessings on Muhammad, his family and Companions. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds"[1108].

Through the blessings of the prayer in this *ijazatname* of Sami Efendi, a great enthusiasm and joy could be seen in his worship and service of others right until his last days. It was also a means for him to reach the people of *tawheed*, with his state and words...

When Sami Efendi was 39 years old, in the year 1931, his *murshid* As'ad Efendi, was martyred. He was now left with the great responsibility of guiding

1108. M. As'ad Efendi, *ibid,* p. 161-162, no: 134.

others, however the closing of the dergahs, and the new social environment were not conducive to him carrying out this trust completely...

Like those Friends of Allah from the past such as Haris Muhasibi and Alauddin Attar, Sami Efendi did not benefit from the large fortune inherited from his family nor did he work in the field of law when the system of law changed from Islamic to secular. Instead he earned his livelihood by keeping the accounts at a timber factory in Adana. At the same time he continued to guide others through his state.

His going to and leaving work at the exact time and with discipline; his generosity and benevolence and manners; his reverence, presence and manners in worship; his state and behaviour in society, were all observed by those who knew him with admiration...

After a long time, when permission was once again given to go to hajj, Sami Efendi set out to perform hajj with the first contingent in the year 1947. From then on he was known as Hajja Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him). Since the first journeys to hajj were travelled via Syria, he was shown great respect and attention by the scholars of Aleppo and Damascus and others along the road to the Hijaz.

The righteous people and scholars of these two cities would longingly await the *suhbah* of Sami Efendi in order to benefit from him...

His life of guidance

Those who loved Sami Efendi from his days at the dergah and who knew his competence in guiding others began to visit him and benefit from him when the opportunities to meet became more widespread. Visitors from all around began to increase and as the opportunity arose, Sami Efendi began to travel to nearby cities, beginning with the cities of central Anatolia, in order to guide the people there.

He then moved to Istanbul at the request of those who loved him, where he lived for approximately 30 years.

On the one hand, Sami Efendi was busy with keeping the accounts at a firm in Tahtakale, in the then trade centre of Istanbul, and on the other hand he continued to serve and guide others. Those who knew him would come from

Anatolia and visit him at his workplace, to benefit from him spiritually. They would return greatly changed after having received spiritual blessings. Sami Efendi would return their visit when suitable; he would go to these cities and plant the seeds of knowledge, wisdom, piety and the notion of serving others. In time he had an elite circle of people who affiliated themselves with him, in Istanbul and in Anatolia, and in particular from the fields of trade and industry, from merchants, and scholars.

Sami Efendi continued to guide others in his general talks and personal ones. His daily life passed either with his work, or writing books, in worship or *suhbah* and serving others. He did not waste one breath of his life.

His beautiful character

The sweetness and beauty on the face of Sami Efendi was indescribable. He was so gentle, soft hearted and angelic that those who knew him well called him 'Angel Sami Efendi'.

When required however, he was extremely brave and strong in character. Even though his face was always smiling, his heart was thoughtful and sad. He was dignified, sober and moderate.

His dress was clean, simple and neat. His beard did not grow longer than a handful. He would grow his hair until the lobes of his ears. He would walk very calmly and slowly, but he would make great progress. Anyone travelling next to him would have to walk fast in order to keep up with him.

He would eat very little, sleep little and preferred silence unless it was absolutely necessary to talk. When necessary he would speak concisely and in accordance with the level of the one he was addressing. There was no word either unnecessary or superfluous that came out of his blessed mouth. Everything he said was proper and correct. He would speak each word clearly and choose them carefully and would repeat any important cautions or advice three times.

He was extremely careful in regards to the rights of others. Whenever he bought a train ticket, he would make sure to have the correct change so that the people in the queue would not have to wait for him.

He was freed from the desire of this world. He was in a constant state of selflessness and sacrifice. He would walk from Karakoy to Tahtakale and donate the money he would otherwise give to the taxi as an expression of gratitude for the bounty of health that Almighty Allah bestowed upon him. He would place the money to be donated into an envelope and present it with great courtesy to a needy person.

Nobody ever saw the great master argue or fight with anyone, nor enter into debate nor backbite anyone. This is because he understood fate completely; he never thought ill of another.

Since he had adopted the divine attributes, the perfect attributes of beauty of Almighty Allah such as '*Sattaru al'uyub*'(concealing others faults) and '*Afuw'* (forgiving others) could be seen manifest in him.

He would never allow those who loved him to lose hope. He would never openly reveal or discuss the faults and mistakes of neglectful and heedless people who came to see him. They would learn their lesson from the polite cautions and warnings given to them by him and would part from him having decided to struggle for the reform of their state.

Not one time did he ever offend a believer or any other creature. His every state and act was measured, orderly and proper. This state of his was a reflection of the following hadith:

اَدَّبَنِي رَبِّى فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبِى

*"**My Lord educated me** and taught **me** ... how well he **educated me and how beautifully** He taught **me** good manners!"* (Suyuti, *Jami'u as-Saghir*, I, 12).

Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would never become angry with anybody, nor would he ever be offended by anybody. He would never expect something in return for a good act of his. Those who loved him and those who criticised him were equal in his sight in terms of being treated well. As for those who criticised him but later realised their mistake and sincerely apologised, he would immediately forgive them.

Whenever he was asked a question or asked to explain a matter, Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would never give orders such as 'Do

this or do not do that”. Instead he would generally suffice by reading a verse from the Qur’an or a hadith, or a rule from Majalla.

He would more often mention the following principles:

1) **“Repelling evil takes priority over attracting benefit”**

That is, if there is benefit and value in a matter in which there is also harm and evil, then one should abandon the benefit and value in order to avoid the harm and evil... In Islam, avoiding its prohibitions is better than following its commands.

In this way he indicated the principle that ‘the duty of avoiding the prohibited, which is obligatory for every believer is more important than supererogatory worship’. Every supplicant would understand this truth in accordance with his own state.

He would give the following example: First the pus needs to be cleaned from the wound (repelling the evil) before the ointment can be applied (attracting the benefit).

2) **“Difficult conditions attract ease”.**

Whether they be physical or spiritual; difficult conditions also contain ease in due proportion. This is why a command of the sharia can never be completely abandoned, no matter how difficult the circumstances and one can benefit from the ease brought by the sharia in order to bring about the command.

3) **“Matters of constriction lead to expansion.”** That is, whenever there is difficulty or hardship in a matter the sharia offers a solution, licence or breadth.

4) **“Where the obstacle is removed the prohibition returns”** If there is a righteous deed that needs to be done and it is being prevented by some obstacle, then when that obstacle has been removed it should be continued to be performed.

5) **“If an obstacle and conflict come together, the obstacle takes priority.**

If a task needs to be done and there is an obstacle, then one must first remove that obstacle.

6) **"Whoever attempts a task before its time, will be punished by being deprived of it"**

If a person is hasty and wishes to obtain something before it is due, they will be punished by being deprived of that thing.

Sami Efendi would continue to recite the verses from the Qur'an, in particular the *Fatiha* and *Ayat al kursi*, and other prayers from the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and other prophets, and would not organise any other prayers either in Arabic or Turkish on his own.

Even though he did not spend any extra efforts in speaking lucidly and eloquently, his words contained a profound depth and subtlety.

This was so much so that those who listened to him were drawn to him like magnets and did not want to part from him.

He was extremely careful about the halal and the haram

When people came to visit Sami Efendi to ask him his advice or listen to him talk, he would first ask them about their profession and whether they were careful about the *halal* and *haram*. He would then ask for other information. He would give his advice with great courtesy and grace:

One time Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was invited to an engagement ceremony. The party requested that he place the ring on the groom's finger. When Sami Efendi saw that the ring was made of gold, he took off his own ring without saying a word and placed it on the groom's finger saying:

"Accept this as a memory of today and give the gold ring to your wife as a gift"[1109].

In this way he taught the groom that men have been prohibited from wearing gold jewellery in a polite way.

❁

In regards to the matter of *halal* provision, he had the following to say:

1109. Mustafa Erish, *Memoirs from the life of Mahmud Sami Efendi,* I, 24.

"The first condition for a person's prayer being accepted is this: to reform his inner world with lawful provision and the final condition is sincerity and presence of heart. That is to turn to Almighty Allah in the proper manner. If the food placed in one's mouth is not lawful, it is extremely difficult for that person to be sincere and present and abandon all other things to turn to Allah"[1110].

"Just as unlawful provision contaminates the heart and the blood, so too it brings ruin to the limbs. It makes one perform bad deeds. From the heart and body that are nourished with lawful food, however, spring righteous deeds. Just as abundant crops are harvested from fertile and pure earth, and no good harvest is obtained from dry and barren earth..."[1111].

"Just as one should be extremely careful about one's provision coming from lawful means, one should also distance oneself from doubtful means. It is important to abide by the condition of avoiding eating all sorts of foods without caution and that the food that one takes in is spiritually clean and pleasant smelling, that is *halal*[1112].

His generosity

The generosity and benevolence of Sami Efendi was indescribable. One time when his economic situation was extremely tight the owner of the company in Adana that he did the accounts for gave him his monthly wage in an envelope. At that point a poor man came asking for charity. He gave that needy man the envelope without even opening it.

Whether he was on a journey to hajj or any other times, if a poor man came and asked him for help time and time again, he would never turn him away and would see to his needs with a smile on his face.

One time he heard a complaint about a poor man that he had helped financially, who was eating an expensive meal in a fine restaurant with this money. He said in response:

1110. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* II, 8.
1111. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* IV, 117.
1112. M. Sami Efendi, *From a letter.*

"His expenses are great that he has become accustomed to eating fine meals. Thus it will not do to give him little; we must increase the amount we give him". He then did in fact increase the money he gave to the poor man.

He would give and give, and give again...One of his greatest pleasures was to give away his most precious belongings to those worthy of them... a most precious rug that was given to him as a gift, his prayer mat, his prayer beads, a pen, fabric and other most unique and valuable items.

Like the sun and the oceans, he was a centre of generosity and mercy. It was impossible for someone who asked him for something, to return empty handed. It did not matter how much the amount of money was in his pocket, he would give it away without hesitation. It was as if Almighty Allah had given him the key to a secret treasure.

Various meals would be prepared in great abundance in his residence. He would eat very little, and offer a great amount to his guests. He would then send the remainder to his neighbours.

Sami Efendi would advise whoever came to see him to have their distress removed by giving charity and he would pray for them.

Compassion towards all creatures

One hajj season Sami Efendi and his spiritual sons (may Allah have mercy on them) were staying in Mecca, in the house of Abdussattar Efendi from Turkestan, in the district of Jiyad. Sami Efendi's room boarded the street whilst his companions' rooms were more towards the inside of the house. One noon he went to the room of his companion and said:

"There is someone outside who is in need of a meal".

One of his spiritual sons who was in his service went to prepare something to eat but when he went to the door, there was nobody to be seen. Thinking that the person left without waiting he went back inside. Ten minutes later Sami Efendi came back and knocked on his door.

"He is back and is looking inside", he said. Another of the young men in his service went to prepare some food and when he went to the door he saw a hungry dog with his tongue sticking out, looking inside. He immediately placed the food in front of him. The dog was so hungry that he finished the whole lot.

This was the grace and humility of this great *wali* of Allah for he did not call the dog a dog, but used the term ‘someone’[1113].

❁

The following is an example which shows how he looked upon all of creation through the perspective of the Creator:

According to a narration by my late father Musa Efendi, Sami Efendi once saw a snake in the house where he was living in Madina. His brothers were anxious to remove it from the house. Sami Efendi showed no signs of distress and merely said:

“Leave it be”.

Later that snake left on its own and was no longer to be seen[1114].

❁

According to a narration by his grandson Mahmud Kirazoglu Beyefendi, one day, a dog with a broken foot came to the garden of Sami Efendi. Sami Efendi had him treated immediately. Approximately two and a half months later, the dog began to bark once more. When they looked out the window they saw another dog next to him whose foot was broken. It seems that the first dog had brought his friend here to this door of mercy.

This dog became very attached to Sami Efendi and never parted from him. Sami Efendi would leave in the morning, on the 7:32 train and return in the evening on the 16:22 train. For years this dog would accompany Sami Efendi to his morning train and then return home. When it was time for the evening train to arrive, he would go to the station on time, but this time he would go the opposite way. There he would meet Sami Efendi and they would walk back home together.

His humility

Despite his elevated station, the Sultan of gnostics, Sami Efendi, saw everyone else, without exception, as superior to him. He would go to visit the

1113. See Sadiq Dana, *Sultan al Arifin*, p. 35-36.
1114. See Sadiq Dana, *Sultan al Arifin*, p. 35.

religious, righteous and pious poor people whom everyone else belittled and ask for their prayers.

He was extremely compassionate, humble and modest towards all people, be they rich or poor, young or old, knowledgeable or illiterate, with rank or without. In his journeys to hajj in particular, he would try to kiss the hands of the Sudanese servants who cleaned the Masjid an-Nabi, and even the doorkeepers, a great proportion of whom were illiterate. He loved these servants because they served at this great door. They too increased in their love and enthusiasm for Sami Efendi, when they saw his grace and humility and they showed him great respect and reverence, which they did not show anyone else. Due of this respect and love they would assign their place in the front row of Ashab-i Suffa, at the most crowded time of hajj, for the honoured Sami Efendi and his companions.

His etiquette of eating

Sami Efendi was extremely careful when it came to the matter of eating. He would always wash his hands both before and after eating. He would sit with great respect at the table on both knees. He would never lean back. Being fully present he would eat whatever was placed in front of him, beginning with the *basmala* and ending with praise, '*alhamdulillah'*. He would begin his meal with a pinch of salt, take small bites, and eat in contemplation and silence. He would always eat from in front of him. He would not blow on his food if it was hot to cool it down , but would wait for it to cool down.

He would take special care to eat his food in silence, with a wakeful heart, with manners and presence. He would remind others that food eaten without contemplation and presence would lead to heedlessness. He was not picky with his food and would eat from each dish, but only taking one or two bites. He said that each lawful bite taken with wakefulness of the heart would strengthen spiritual perfection.

He would eat whatever was placed in front of him, even if it was a dry piece of bread, with great reverence and gratitude. Never once did he use words such as 'not cooked enough, too salty, not enough salt, too sweet, not sweet enough, and tasty or no taste'.

He preferred to eat on the floor but would eat at the table if that was where the food was prepared. If food was placed in separate dishes, he would

wait until everyone had their plate before he began eating. Just as he liked to do everything on time, he also liked his food to be ready on time.

He would end his meal with a pinch of salt and read the table prayer slowly and clearly.

He did not like to be praised

Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) did not like to be praised, and would be saddened by extreme compliments. When people would praise his beautiful state, he would never attribute this to himself, and would immediately say: "*Bi iznillah*, by the permission of Allah". In this way he would show that every success was only possible by the grace of Allah. Out of his great courtesy, he would take great care not to offend. In his eyes, there was no difference between being praised and being criticised.

Just as he did not like to be praised himself, he also did not praise another to his face. He would complement them in accordance with their state. Sometimes he would praise people in their absence who were deserving of respect.

This is because Sami Efendi knew well the calamity of being praised; he did not praise his disciples to their face or behind their backs. He would smile at those whose character, state and behaviour he approved of and treat them with great courtesy.

His silence

Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) could remain silent for hours if there was no need to talk. During these periods of silence he would be busy with *dhikr* and *muraqaba*. Those who were with him at these times felt a deep peace and would be unable to continue this state after parting from him.

He was extremely particular about the students who were under his guidance and training and did not like them speaking unnecessarily. One of the people in his service narrates:

"When I first joined my Master, I asked many questions in order to compensate for some of my defects. My master did not approve of my state and furrowed his brow and there appeared on his blessed face a great disapproval.

He implied that such futile questions were not appropriate for a traveller. I realised my mistake and from then on tried to preserve my etiquette, instead of asking such questions. Even though I stayed for many years in his presence, by the grace of Allah, I did not have the nerve to ask even one question, and did not speak unless absolutely necessary...

Approximately 20-22 years passed. One day I felt brave enough to ask:

“Sir, I have been in your presence for quite a long time. Despite this I have not been brave enough to ask anything. Whereas many people meet with you for quite a long time and benefit from you. What is to become of me?”

He responded:

“The people of submission have no need for questions. This is the word of Gaws al Azam, Abdulqadir Gaylani”.

Days and weeks would pass on the journeys to the Hijaz and Anatolia, but only eight or ten words at the most would exit his blessed mouth, which were absolutely essential. However talks on the matter of the heart were an exception. In that case, if required, he could speak with great zeal for hours and not tire in the least. There was also no superfluity nor was there any insufficiency in his words.

He loved the people of silence and adab, and would sit with them and compliment them. He took great care with their training and desired that they be adorned with beautiful traits and supplicated to Allah for this.

His manner of slaughtering

Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would always advise slaughtering a sacrificial animal and giving charity in order to gain the pleasure of Allah and for the removal of sicknesses and calamities. It was a frequent habit of his to pay the price of slaughtering an animal. He would take care to make sure that the animal was well fed and had all its limbs in order.

Before the slaughter he would make sure the pit was dug with care, the knife was sharp, and the animal’s eyes blindfolded with a clean, large cloth.

He would remain in the area where the slaughter was to take place and wait on foot until the hide was removed from the animal, in a state of great

reverence, presence, and awe as if he were in prayer. When the slaughter was complete he would go inside and offer two rakats of prayer.

His hospitality

The honourable master led an ordered life that worked like clockwork. The times for accepting visitors would be informed to him beforehand. He would become saddened by people who promised that they would be somewhere at a particular time but failed to appear. He would be dressed neat and tidy when it was time to receive guests and would never greet any visitors in a state of 'house attire'. He would greet his guests with a smile at the door and offer them a seat opposite him. He would talk about matters that were beneficial for his guests. In a short time his guest would part from him in a state of contentment and with great joy and peace in accordance with his intention and sincerity. Sami Efendi would accompany his guests to the door where he would give his farewells to them.

In Ramadan, when offering the *iftar* meal, he would prefer to serve at the table himself, and would only sit at the table when his guests insisted in order to please them.

He would wash his hands quickly in order to not make others wait for him, both before and after eating. When he was by himself, however, he would wash his hands more slowly and with greater care. He would offer his prayers, reciting short *suras* if there was someone waiting for him, and longer ones when he was by himself.

He would always offer his guests a gift. In fact, he was even known to give a gift that he had received an hour earlier to a guest who arrived an hour later.

His travels

His journeys were always peaceful and orderly. He would organise his departure and arrival times on a Monday or a Thursday. He would not set out at night unless he had to. He would take with him the most essential items on his journey. He would place his clothes neatly in his suitcase, in snow-white wrapping bundles.

He would set out on his journey at the appointed time and day and return in the same manner. He would consult with his companions about the most minor of matters, and would pleasantly endure any difficulties that occurred during the journey, not showing any irritation or impatience.

He would always be in a state of ablution and never go anywhere without it. Even in the most crowded times of hajj, when he was in a state of ablution, he would renew it in order to perform a second prayer and he would say: *"Nur'un ala nur"* ("Light upon light"). He would take his ablution with the greatest reverence and presence of heart and with great care.

When he was in the Hijaz, he would continue to pray at the Baytullah and the Masjid an-Nabi regularly, five times a day. He would spend most of his time in prayer and supplication and when he returned to rest in a state of fatigue, he would still meet with people who came to visit him in order to please them.

His *suhbah*

Sami Efendi's life was founded on *suhbah*. As a requirement of the time in which he lived, people from all walks of life would attend these *suhbahs*, which would take place in people's houses. There would be an indescribable atmosphere at these talks. Just as he continued in his *suhbah* at every opportunity, he also ordered his students to do so, wherever they were, even if they were only a small group.

Through his sincere efforts, countless number of houses in every corner of Anatolia were transformed into schools of knowledge and wisdom. Those who wished to attend the *suhbah* would come silently and wait quietly for it to begin.

Before beginning his *suhbah*, Sami Efendi would indicate for a sura to be recited from the Qur'an. The reciter would be sat down up high and begin to recite peacefully.

Later Sami Efendi would offer the gifts of one Fatiha and three Ikhlas readings to the spirits of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his blessed companions (may Allah be pleased with them). He would then carry out his *suhbah* with great zeal. In his *suhbahs* he would generally

read from his notes in front of him and would, from time to time, explain matters as they arose.

Sami Efendi was a true Wali of Allah, who lived upon the direction of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and encouraged others to do so. The essence of his *suhbahs* was this: commentaries on the Qur'anic verses, explanations of the hadith, and examples from the lives of the Companions, and of the friends of Allah and their faith, patience, forbearance, and sacrifice in the way of Allah.

He would especially recite the verses about the '*qalb-i salim*' (the sound heart) and emphasise *adab*.

He would give plenty of examples from the life of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), in order to explain how he was a living example and the *uswat al hasena* (a 'perfect example'), and also from the sacrifices made by his Companions, their worship and their interactions with each other.

Through these talks, those who continued sincerely in their *awrad* and *adhkar* prescribed for them by Sami Efendi, began to change visibly and have developments occur to them. Obvious transformations and spiritual development occurred from pride to humility, from hard heartedness to compassion, from miserliness to generosity, from laziness to striving, from cowardice to courage, from crudeness to courtesy, from disorder to order and regularity, from haste to slowing down, from acrimony to harmony, and from pessimism to optimism.

Whenever a Hafiz of the Qur'an came who lived the Qur'an with his state, his words and with love, Sami Efendi would immediately compliment him and bring him near to him and narrate the following event:

"One time when I was in Adana, we needed to change the site of some graves. One of these graves belonged to a hafiz who lived in accordance with his knowledge. He had passed away approximately 60 years earlier, but when his grave was opened his shroud lay there white as ever. Undoubtedly this was a special favour bestowed by Allah on the true hafiz.

Be with the righteous!

In many of his talks Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would relate the following event:

“There was once a man by the name of Adil Bey, who lived in Beylerbeyi who was of great spiritual worth. I would visit him from time to time. One day he gave me the following advice:

“Protect yourself from heedless people. Do not sit and chat with them. The heart reflects on to the other what is in it. The sins of the one opposite you will taint you. A jar of vinegar will leak vinegar, and a jar of honey will ooze honey.

Suhbah, consultation and work should be carried out with faithful and righteous people. People who are not faithful or righteous have oppressed themselves. As long as one does not see any inclination towards good in them, one should only sit with them as is necessary and then immediately distance oneself from them”.

He then related the following event that happened to him:

“In the hijri year 1340, a *mawlid* was read at the Hagia Sofia mosque in Istanbul. The mosque was completely filled. Scholars and students had taken their places within the mosque, with their turbans on their head. Since at that time most of the congregation were people of knowledge, their various states gave the group a kind of awe and majesty. The unique hafiz of that time began to recite from the Holy Qur’an and the *mawlid*.

I had sat near the pulpit and was listening. A short time later I began to feel constricted. I felt tight, constricted and narrowed...I should not have felt such a state in a mosque such as the Hagia Sofia and amongst the community of Muslims, while the Qur’an and *mawlid* were being read.

I curiously searched for the reason. Lo and behold what did I see but a man opposite me, whose heart was hardened. His chest was directly opposite mine...I realised that I was bothered by the transferral and I changed my position. I felt a little relief; however, I could not throw off the effect of this on me for one week...”

Such states have occurred to many of the believers. Thus, it is important for a person to take care that those near them are righteous, faithful and pure hearted"[1115].

After narrating this event Sami Efendi would continue in his talk as follows:

"In Adana there lived an animal called a chameleon. We would observe it curiously as children. Whichever object it climbed onto, its colour would change to the colour of that object and so is the heart. It has the ability to take on the colour of those near it. It will receive peace from the peaceful, and heedlessness from the heedless. This is why we should not sit too long in the presence of the heedless, but only see to our essential affairs and then part immediately"[1116].

Sami Efendi also said:

"A person's character will take shape in accordance with its surroundings. A person with a good character who spends time amongst heedless people, will lose this good character as a result of this togetherness and their character will become carnal and satanic"[1117].

His submission

Sami Efendi would talk about submission a great deal. One time he said:

"Submission should be absolute... If submission is lacking there will be no result and no prosperity. It is through submission that the heart wakes up, the *nafs* is reformed, the chest is opened up, and the body performs *dhikr*.

I had a sister who could not walk. She was almost crippled. At that time we went to a doctor in Adana. We had gone to all of the doctors outside of Adana and had found no cure. They eventually told us:

"When you leave Mersin and enter the Toros mountains, there is a tomb of a man by the name of Kaplanca Baba. Take the ill lady there and let her stay

1115. See M. Sami Efendi, *The noble human being,* p. 62-63; *Eid suhbah,* p. 39.
1116. M. Sami Efendi, *Eid suhbah,* p. 39-40.
1117. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentary on Chapter Baqara*, p. 154.

there for one night. By the permission of Allah, that man's prayer and spirit will be the means for her cure".

Since all of our hope in medicine was gone, my mother and I took my sister to that place. During the night my sister began to scream. My mother was worried that she had lost her mind and she ran to her and said:

"My daughter, what is wrong?"

My sister replied:

"An uncle with a very nice face came. He stepped on my foot and it hurt a little. But praise be to Allah, I am healed. Oh my God, I can walk!" We went to her in amazement. Without waiting for the morning we left and returned home with the sister whom we had carried on our backs, now walking on her own feet. From that day on, my sister never once had any pain anywhere, not even in her knee, until the day she died.

The most important factor here is complete submission. Otherwise other people also went there, some of them benefitted others did not..."[1118].

This state is a favour bestowed by Almighty Allah on his righteous slaves. The Absolute Doer of all things is Almighty Allah. If He wills He can bring about anything using a righteous servant of His as a means.

True Learning

In his talks Sami Efendi would say that true learning or education is learning *marifatullah*. Knowing and feeling the greatness and majesty of Allah, Most High, in our hearts is true knowledge and he would remind of the honour of possessing this knowledge at every opportunity.

One day one man who had come to visit Sami Efendi, wished to be the recipient of his prayers and also to have his nephews meet him. When they entered his presence and kissed his hand he introduced them saying:

"Sir, these young men studied in America and became engineers. Please pray for them".

1118. See M. Sami Efendi, *Eid suhbah,* p. 28-29. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah:Khwaja Musa Topbas and His suhbah,* prep by. Erkam Publications, 1999, p. 195.

Sami Efendi smiled and said to them:

"I too am a graduate of Dar-ul Funun University. However, true education is knowing Allah"[1119].

Some extracts from his works

Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote many works, having made great efforts and straining his eyes. These works are filled with wisdom.

In his works he penned the most appropriate and necessary matters for the century in which he lived, with the most suitable of language. He would first read what he wrote to those in his household, then at his talks and then he would publish them in a book. We have compiled some parts of this work, which is a precious treasure of knowledge and wisdom, below:

Following the *ahl al-sunnah*

"The essence of all advice is this: Ensure togetherness and become familiar with people who are religious and show sensitivity towards the Islamic rulings. Being religious and devoted to the sharia is only possible by following the path of the people of Sunnah. These are the people who will be saved on the Day of Judgement. It is impossible to be saved without following such believers on this path of uprightness"[1120].

Learning the religious sciences

"O my brother! These are the end of times. Religion has grown weak, the Sunnah has been abandoned, and innovations have spread about everywhere. It is essential in such a period of darkness to strive to learn the creed of our belief and the other religious sciences"[1121].

"It is a communally obligatory act to make sure that there is a scholar in every land and every people, who can teach the matters of the religion. If there

1119. Mustafa Erish, *ibid,* I, 20-21.
1120. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* I, 118.
1121. M. Smi Efendi, *ibid,* I, 101.

is no such scholar to be found, then the entire people in that land are responsible for that sin. However, since it is personally obligatory for every believer to know the daily necessary rulings (*ilm-i hal)*, that is, religious matters which concern him directly, those who do not learn these are sinners for their ignorance. Ignorance in the lands of Islam cannot be put forth as an excuse"[1122].

*Uprightness (*Istiqamah*)*

"The person of *istiqamah* should be as upright as a mountain for the mountain has four properties:

1) It will not melt from the heat,

2) It will not freeze from the cold,

3) It will not fall over from the wind,

4) Floods will not overtake it"[1123].

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and Abu Bakr (May Allah be happy be with him) praised our prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in his absence as follows:

"You were like a lofty mountain that even the strongest winds could not move, and that the deepest shocks could not eliminate"[1124].

A sound heart

"According to the people of wisdom, for the heart to be adorned with spirituality and wisdom, that is for a person to reach the state of becoming a dignified servant depends on these five conditions:

1) Keeping company with the righteous and truthful,

2) Reciting the Qur'an frequently while pondering on its meaning, and performing salat,

3) Fasting, eating little and staying hungry,

1122. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 64.
1123. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentaries on Chapters Yunus and Hud,* p. 145.
1124. Abu Nuaym, *Marifat al Sahaba,* Riyadh, 1419, I, 264.

4) Being in a constant state of *dhikr*,

5) Supplicating and entreating Allah during the predawn”[1125].

“A person with a sound heart is the one who enters the Divine presence having been saved and purified from ignorance in his religion, from bad character, and from the evil of his wealth and children. The one who spends his wealth in good deeds and who teaches his children the religious rulings and lives by them; and those who enter the hereafter freed from diseases of the heart, from bad character and ignorance will benefit from their wealth and their children...”

There are three signs of a sound heart:

1) It does not offend anyone,

2) It is not offended by anyone,

3) It does not expect any reward or recompense when it does good to another”[1126].

“The body of the human being is earthly and belongs to the earth. In terms of eating, drinking, sleeping and conjugal relations it is similar to other creatures. However, in terms of his spirit, he is a creature of light, and belongs to Allah.

If the desires of the *nafs* dominate in a person, they become distant from Allah, and their spirit loses its subtlety, its delicacy and its depth, and the heart becomes dark...

However, if the *ruh* overcomes the *nafs*, the believer gets closer to Allah, and the heart and the body become luminous.

This is why it is essential that one purifies and cleanses one’s heart, and illuminates it. The heart cannot be illuminated unless it is cleaned and a person in this state can never be freed of the diseases of the heart...

If the root of a tree is rotten, then the signs of this will become apparent in its branches and leaves and in its fruit. If there is a disease in the heart and

1125. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* II, 13; *Eid Suhbah,* p. 41; *The noble human being,* p. 26-64.
1126. M. Sami Efendi, *The prophet Ibrahim,* s. 163-164.

rottenness, then the harmful effects of these can be seen in every limb and affair of the body. It needs to be cured.

The cure of the heart is to remember Allah to whom the spirit belongs. The diseases of the heart can be treated through *dhikrullah*"[1127].

Tasawwuf

"Tasawwuf is the source of good manners and the rulings of the sharia. Tasawwuf is to feel a deep love for Allah and its result is to abandon one's egoism.

Tasawwuf is to be in a state of constant *dhikr* and cleanse one's heart of everything other than Allah"[1128].

Tariqah and sayr u suluq

"Tariqah is the servant of the sharia. Just as *wudu*, cleanliness and purification is preparation for prayer, so too tariqah cleans and prepares the heart for presence with Allah"[1129].

"The most important cause of prosperity and progress in the elevated tariq is love and spiritual connection with the master (*rabita*). This is through the *tawajjuh* of the *murshid* and gaining his attention and favour. "The condition of love is assent". That is, to love what one's *murshid* loves, and to dislike what he dislikes"[1130].

"Just as one needs the diagnosis of a doctor in order to diagnose and cure the diseases of the body; one should not be ignorant of the fact one is in more need of a spiritual doctor who can diagnose such diseases of the heart as pride, envy, and love of this world, and treat them"[1131].

1127. M. Sami Efendi, *Eid suhbah,* p. 76-77.
1128. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba*, VI, 13.
1129. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 156.
1130. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 176.
1131. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 146.

*Purification (*Tazkiya*)*

“In order to obtain true faith, one needs to remove the diseases of one’s heart. Purification of the *nafs* is essential for this...Being freed of the evil-commanding soul is only possible through purifying it and raising it the stage of contentment (*nafs al mutmainna*). Then the reality of faith will become clear and gain in strength. Faith at this level becomes part of one’s conscience and is safe from being lost...

It is nothing but ignorance for a person to continue to treat their outer and bodily illnesses but remain heedless of the spiritual illnesses of their heart”[1132].

“Entering into Islam in the true sense is dependent on annihilating the evil-commanding soul and following the divine commands. Before entering the stage of the *nafs al mutmainna*, the Islam that comes about through mere approval of the heart is called ‘metaphorical Islam’. Once the *nafs* reaches the stage of *mutmainna* then this is called ‘true faith’ (*iman-i haqiqi*)”[1133].

“The person who serves his *nafs al ammara* cannot request any reward from Almighty Allah when he enters his presence. For whilst in the world he forgot Almighty Allah and served his own *nafs al ammara*”[1134].

Jihad

“*Jihad* is divided into two types:

1) Lesser *jihad*: This is the physical struggle and battle made against the Unbelievers.

2) Greater *jihad*: This is the struggle against one’s own *nafs* which consists of reforming one’s heart. Battle is the reform of the outer. Reform of one’s heart is much more difficult and takes much longer than the reform of one’s outer aspect. The aim of the lesser *jihad* is to attain Paradise and His mercy; the aim of the greater *jihad* is to reach Almighty Allah and witness His Divine Presence. The aim of the lesser *jihad* is martyrdom whereas the aim of

1132. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,,* I, 124-125.
1133. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 127-129.
1134. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 151.

the greater *jihad* is faithfulness. The degree of the *siddiq* is over the degree of the *shahid* (martyr)”[1135].

“In order to succeed in the struggle against one’s *nafs* one needs to be in a constant state of *dhikr* and submission. The *jihad* against one’s *nafs* is the greatest *jihad* for it is a struggle that never ends and continues until one dies. The battle against the enemy continues for a certain period and is then over. The struggle against the *nafs* will always be there. *Jihad* against the *nafs* is possible through *dhikr*, submission, through worship, and applying all the rules of the Qur’an and Sunnah to all aspects of one’s life.

All enemies can become friends when one is good to them, however, the nafs will never become your friend. However good you are to it the nafs will run riot, and become a savage enemy and the battle against it will become increasingly harder. This is why the *jihad* against the *nafs* is the greatest battle and is a personal obligation on us all”[1136].

After mentioning the pain of the conscience and distress felt by those Companions who stayed back from the Battle of Tabuk without any excuse, Sami Efendi then said:

“If staying back from the lesser *jihad* is the cause for such shame and loss, then imagine how great a loss and pain it would be if one abandons the greatest *jihad* of purifying one’s *nafs* and the path to becoming a perfected human being...This loss and pain will be felt both in this world and in the next”[1137].

Dhikr

“The reality of *dhikr* and its perfection is to forget everything else other than what one is remembering at the moment of *dhikr*. What is needed of the traveller on the path of truth is to reach the state of ‘true *dhikr*’ which is the greatest aim of all”[1138].

1135. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentary on Chapter Baqara,* p. 273.
1136. M. Sami Efendi, *Eid Suhbah,* p. 30-31.
1137. M. Sami Efendi, *The Noble Human being,* p. 18-19.
1138. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* VI, 95.

“The best of deeds, the most virtuous of obedience is to have knowledge of Allah, to know the path to *tawheed* and to struggle against the desires of the *nafs*. The servant is purified of his sins through *dhikrullah*. Purification of the *nafs* can only be attained through *dhikrullah*. The sole purpose of cleansing one’s heart is to be able to perform much *dhikrullah*. Through *dhikrullah* the servant gains the strength to worship Allah and is saved from the wiles and traps of Satan”[1139].

“The intelligent person is the one who remembers Allah much. *Dhikr* is a means for cleaning one’s inner world and polishes the heart”[1140].

“The person who is truly alive is the one whose heart is alive. The heart is the House of Allah (*Baytullah*). If there is no love for Allah and no *dhikr* there, that heart is dead... Haqim at Tirmidhi said:

“*Dhikrullah* keeps the heart alive and softens it. When the heart is distanced from *dhikr* it enters under the command of the *nafs* and dries up and hardens through the heat of the appetites. The other limbs reach such a state that they can no longer worship and become hardened. If this state continues then it becomes good for no other purpose than to be burned in the fire like dried wood. We seek refuge in Allah from falling into such a state”[1141].

Awliya

“The *awliyullah* are like rain. Just as it is not possible for human life to continue without rain so too it is not possible for the continuation of the created realm without spiritual rain. Just as all rain has benefits according to the time in which it falls, so too the *awliyullah* have their benefits according to the time in which they came. Each of them has their own special station in the sight of Allah. This is why one should not compare those who came before with those who came after.

For instance people generally accept those *awliyullah* who departed from this world a few centuries ago. The reason for this is: the *awliyullah* who have deceased no longer have the duty of guiding people. So Satan suggests no obstacle in approving of them. However, Satan puts great efforts into prevent-

1139. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentaries on Chapters Yunus and Hud,* p. 148.
1140. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentary on Chapter Baqara,* p. 259.
1141. M. Sami Efendi, *The prophet Yusuf,* p. 26.

ing people from approaching the perfected guides of their own time who are still living and guiding others. He tries to make others reject them for Satan never desires the salvation of the believers"[1142].

Muslim brotherhood

"It is a duty incumbent on all Muslims, in accordance with the principles of Islam, to have pity on one another, to love one another, to help one another, to preserve the rights of one another, and to strive for the religion of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and to attain a noble rank. From this respect then all of the believers are like one person, one body"[1143].

"If the Muslims are not uniting amongst themselves in the way commanded by Allah, Most High, and following a path which is outside that prescribed by the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), then Allah forbid, they will have fallen into the pits of disgrace and shame...It is only when the hearts are united in the reality of *tawheed* that they will attain the help of Allah and peace and wishes will come true"[1144].

*Giving out (*infaq*)*

"Just as the servant gives the best of what he owns to Allah, so too Allah gives him the best of His favours. Almighty Allah says: '**Will the reward for doing good be anything other than good?'** (Rahman, 55:60)"[1145].

"Giving out differs according to people's ranks. The *infaq* of the lay person is the mere giving away of his wealth, and the reward is Paradise. The *infaq* of the elite is, in addition to giving away his wealth, is to purify his *nafs* and cleanse his heart, and the reward for this on the Day of Judgement is the witnessing of the Beauty of Allah. This is why it is befitting for the believer, when he gives out his wealth, to also reform his *nafs* and devote his heart to Allah. The believer who feels love for wealth and worldly property cannot attain the pleasure and perfection of their faith. It is a sign of the believer

1142. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* VI, 160.
1143. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 14.
1144. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 18-19.
1145. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentary on Chapter Baqara,* p. 361.

that he shuns miserliness and tries to be generous with whatever wealth he has"[1146].

"The needy are a gift from Allah. To turn away the poor who asks for something is to say: "I have no need for Allah's gifts". If you have nothing to give then send him away with some nice words. One should pay attention in particular to those who come asking after the evening prayer"[1147].

Time

One needs to spend the capital of one's time on the most important righteous deeds...Backbiting does nothing more than increase a person's heedlessness. Strive to obtain a pure heart that harbours a good opinion of everyone. Turn your face away completely from things that do not concern you and contemplate on the divine greatness and majesty. Put all your efforts into gaining His pleasure. Do not become bogged down by the pleasures of your *nafs*. Shun wasting your time with intensity.

Treat your family with compassion. Let your efforts and enthusiasm in gaining your hereafter be more than that for gaining this world. The result of being deceived by worldly bounties is nothing more than deprivation of the bounties of the hereafter and great regret...

Do not remain idle! Do not occupy yourself with vain pursuits that are an obstacle to attaining *taqwa*. Seek refuge in Allah constantly and entreat Him! Only spend time with those people who have rights over you, as much as is absolutely necessary! In this way you will have pleased them. Do not neglect '*amr bi'l ma'ruf wa nahy an al munkar*'. Encourage all the members of your household to perform the prayer, to become righteous people and to apply the principles of Islam. You are responsible for those under your care and will be taken to account on the Day of Judgement...

A sign that Allah, Most High, has turned away from a person is that that person occupies himself with vain and unbeneficial affairs"[1148].

1146. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* 346.
1147. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* VI, 207.
1148. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 111-113.

Who are the intelligent ones?

"The intelligent one is the one who is watchful over every state and strives to make the most of the time he is in. He is also the one who abandons *tul'i amal* that is running after vain pursuits as if he will remain in this world forever"[1149].

"The intelligent one is not deceived by the bounties of this world. He is not pleased with anything other than Allah for everything other than Allah is bound to annihilation. To take pleasure from fleeting and mortal things is neither rational nor wise"[1150].

"The people of intelligence must abandon the toys of this world that is the desires and whims of their *nafs*. This world consists of amusement and playthings and is deceiving, and its calamities and disasters are many. One must abandon the desires of one's *nafs* if one wants to avoid falling into the well of one's caprices. The way to rid oneself of one's caprices is to abandon one's inclination towards the *masiwa*, and turn to Allah and continue to perform *dhikr*"[1151].

Love of this world

"Love of this world makes one forget the hereafter, and is the beginning of all sins and the greatest of the great sins. We can see that all manner of sins are a result of extreme love for this world"[1152].

"What befits the intelligent person is to avoid tiring oneself struggling with the trivial matters and things of this world. A man's provision has already been allocated. No person can gain more than what has already been assigned for them"[1153].

Supplication to Allah

"Supplication is the most beneficial of all medicine. It prevents the coming of misfortune and lightens any misfortune that has already arrived. Sup-

1149. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* IV, 171.
1150. M. Sami Efendi, *The prophet Ibrahim,* p. 143.
1151. M. Sami Efendi, *The prophet Yusuf,* p. 30.
1152. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* VI, 36.
1153. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 40.

plication is the weapon of the believer. Supplication should be carried out with presence of heart, contemplating the greatness of Allah and at times when prayers are most accepted. For instance, during the last third of the night one should face the *qibla*, head bowed down, heart saddened in a state of supplication and entreaty and praise Almighty Allah, and invoke peace and blessings on the Messenger of Allah, and first of all repent and seek forgiveness for any mistakes, having giving out any amount of charity, and be resolute and persistent in one's asking from Allah"[1154].

"Some people say that if you read such and such a prayer you will obtain what you want, however if the heart is not pure, saying such prayers are of no benefit. For instance, there is a great amount of water on the surface of the earth. Their source is one. However some water is nice and sweet, whilst other water is found in pits and you cannot drink it and it has no benefit. Thus in all cases, the source of the water must be pure. The value of the water will increase to the degree that its source is pure. In the same way, the heart, which is like a spiritual spring must be pure"[1155].

Raising children

"Muslim mothers and fathers are responsible for educating their children, who have been bestowed upon them in a pure natural state, in the matters of religion, and teach them their creed. If they do not do so, they will be responsible"[1156].

Usury/Interest

"The one who insists on usury will have an end affair which is destitute and they will lose the blessings of their wealth, no matter how much they have. That person will be known amongst the people as a bad person and a sinner, and will not be trusted nor esteemed, and their heart will become completely hardened"[1157].

1154. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* III, 249.
1155. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 152-153.
1156. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* II, 67.
1157. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 69.

Envy

Envy is one of the vile traits of the *nafs*. One should try to annihilate this feeling with *tawheed*, that is saying '*La ilaha illa Allah"* and continuing in one's *dhikr*"[1158].

"If you envy another, your envy will not harm your enemy, but only yourself"[1159].

Provision

"**Take provision; but the best provision is *taqwa* of Allah** (Baqara, 2:197).

Know that the provision for the hereafter is to shun vile things. The best of provisions is fear of Allah. It is not provision obtained from what one eats. The essence of the matter is this:

Man is on two journeys. The first is the journey of this world and the other is the journey from this world. The journey of this world requires provision and this is food. The journey from this world also requires provision and this is to know Allah, to love Him and to give one's heart to none other than Him, to be obedient to Him always, and to shun anything that opposes Him and shun His prohibitions".

This provision is better than the provision for this worldly journey. The provision of this world only sees to the needs of the body. The provision for the hereafter saves one from eternal punishment. Worldly provision is fleeting whereas provision for the hereafter allows one to attain eternal and pure pleasure"[1160].

One's Limbs

"Allah Most High willed that each limb be used for the purpose in which it was created. The reason for the creation of the heart is to occupy it with *marifah* and *tawheed*. The duty of the tongue is to be occupied with pronouncing the words of the unity of Allah and reciting the Qur'an, to shun seeking

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1158. M. Sami Efendi, *The prophet Yusuf,* p. 19.
1159. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* 21.
1160. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentary on Chapter Baqara,* p. 249-250.

out other's faults, and to address people in a gentle and conciliatory manner. The one who does not keep his promise to Allah in using every limb in accordance with its purpose will meet with His wrath"[1161].

Migration to Madina and his last days

Throughout his life Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) obeyed the Holy Qur'an and followed the footsteps of the blessed Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). As a manifestation of this sensitivity he was allowed to spend his last days in the enlightened city of the Messenger of Allah, in his spiritual presence. Musa Efendi, his spiritual son and successor, relates his last days as follows:

"It was the autumn of the year 1976. I felt a wish to go and visit my honoured teacher in his house in Erenkoy, and also to get rid of the distress and spiritual pain brought about by this worldly life through his nourishing advice.

He accepted me into his presence with a smile. He had no other visitors. He gave me some personal advice and then looked at the closed door of the room – this being an indication of privacy - and said:

"The time has come to migrate to Madina without ever returning. Let this remain between you and me; let no one else hear about it".

Approximately six months passed. He repeated the same wish to his honourable wife and family members. He had convinced his family and at the same time was supplicating and entreating Allah to make his wish come true. He had made the necessary preparations for leaving.

Those who eventually heard the news of this migration, those who loved him in Istanbul and Anatolia, were deeply saddened and in a state of lament. But it was to no avail, for the decision was final. Fate had determined it as such. Separation for the people of love was a state unbearable and intolerable. They were right. As long as they were to be separated from this king of hearts, raised by the centuries before him, they would not be able to witness that radiant, beautiful face nor find any cure for their ails in his subtle, spiritual, blessed talks. They could only find consolation in the phrase frequently

1161. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentaries on Chapters Yunus and Hud,* p. 79.

repeated by the Friends of Allah: “The one in Yemen is close to me, while the one next to me is in Yemen”.

By the help of Allah, Most High, his wish came true and one and a half years later he reached Madina, the Pure City, with his entire family. Praise be to Allah, my honourable master was very happy and joyful that Allah had allowed this to happen.

After resting for ten or fifteen days, he began to accept visitors on the condition that they were not too many. And amongst his talks he began to read impromptu, the famous poem praising the prophet Muhammad by the poet Urfali Nabi which indicated that one should have the best of manners and respect when in the holy city. The name of the poem was ‘*Sakın terk-i edepten kûy-i Mahbûb-i Hüdâ’dır bu!’(Beware of being incourteous in this land for it is the land of the Beloved of Allah’*.

The years passed by in this way. My honourable master went into complete retreat and spent all of his time in prayer, *dhikr*, *muraqaba* and seeking Allah’s forgiveness. His illnesses were also increasing day by day. Medical intervention and diligent care gave no fruits, and his already delicate and thin body began to practically melt away. His blood pressure was high. Despite all of this pain, not one time did he ever complain saying: “I have such and such a pain in my body”, or “I have a headache”. In fact, the fault in his eyes increased and he reached a state where he could no longer see. A close relative of his had him operated on by a trusted doctor and he was able to see again. Even under these painful circumstances he was always praying and seeking forgiveness.

Twenty five years ago his loved ones had allocated for him a grave site in the graveyard of Ayyub Sultan in Istanbul. He was not very pleased at this and said:

“If you ask me my opinion, my heart yearns for the *Jannat al Baqi* graveyard in Madina”.

Allah, Most High, was letting this pure, untainted servant of His live his last days.

It was approximately 4:30 in the morning, on the 10th day of the month of *Jamadi al awwal*, in the year 1404 (12th of February, 1984) that this perfect

human being, this Perfected Guide that the centuries had raised, and which the poets called 'the Pride of the wise ones, and the *Badr-i hafa*[1162]*', Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) flew to the most elevated station. He kept repeating 'Allah, Allah' and was like an embodiment of the verse:* **'…return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased! Enter among My slaves! Enter My Garden'** (Fajr, 89:28-30). That is he migrated from this fleeting world to the eternal realm. After he was washed and shrouded, his funeral prayer took place in the Masjid an-Nabi, and this pure son of the prophet was carried past the Blessed Tomb, in complete silence upon the hands of righteous people, to the *Jannat al Baqi*, the place he had so desired, to be buried in the holy earth next to the graves of Uthman Dhinnurayn (may Allah be pleased with him) and Abu Said al Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him).

In a very short time news of his death reached the whole world and funeral prayers were performed in his absence. That great friend of Allah gave his entire life to Islam, making great sacrifices to illuminate the hearts hungry for spirituality…"[1163].

The grave of this *wali* of Allah, who followed in the footsteps of the beloved prophet, is now in line with the tomb of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

May Almighty Allah allow him to intercede for us all! Amen!

Words of wisdom

• "Not everyone is a servant of Allah, but they are a creature of Allah. The true servant abides by the commands of Allah completely, and avoids His prohibitions. This is the real servant. People who waste their time in heedlessness and give no importance to worship or obedience are not servants of Allah"[1164].

• "A son who rebels against his compassionate father would be called a madman. No words suffice to describe the person who goes against the commands of the Most Merciful of the Merciful"[1165].

1162. The full moon which is hidden behind the clouds of which the Gnostics are proud of.
1163. Sadiq Dana, *Sultan al Arifin* p. 95-100.
1164. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* VI, 217.
1165. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 219.

• "True modesty is to abandon sins when one is alone and no one is there to see them, in the belief that Almighty Allah hears, sees and knows everything..."[1166].

• "If a believer would be ashamed if others knew of his inner thoughts and hopes, then he is not a true believer"[1167].

• "Both worldly and otherworldly happiness can be attained by using the body for the lawful acts of this world, and the heart to turn to Allah"[1168].

• "Striving to gain the pleasure of Allah is the highest rank of the duty of servanthood"[1169].

• "The most virtuous of all worship is to befriend the friends of Allah and to be the enemy of the enemies of Allah (that is love to those who are worthy of it, and hate for those who deserve it). To be able to act as such comes from sincere and pure love"[1170].

• "Islam commands Muslims to be people of balance in all affairs related to one's religion and one's world and to distance oneself from fanaticism and going to extremes. Islam encourages the Muslims to treat the non-Muslims with gentleness on the condition that they are not betrayers or they are not at war with them"[1171].

• "The sole refuge of the travellers on the path of truth in approaching Almighty Allah are their tears"[1172].

• "The distress of this world is clearly much lighter than the distress of the hereafter. This is why it is essential that the servant is never heedless in his worship, his obedience and *dhikrullah*"[1173].

• "On the night of *Beraat* a ruling is given about every person. It does not befit the one for whom a ruling is to be given to spend that night in sleep. Rather they should pray, supplicate, worship, repent, seek forgiveness, show

1166. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 207.
1167. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 210.
1168. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 201.
1169. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 63.
1170. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 96.
1171. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* II, 140.
1172. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* VI, 193.
1173. M. Sami Efendi, *Commentaries on Chapters Yunus and Hud,* p. 42.

gratitude, and remember Allah and beg that the ruling given about them is a good one"[1174].

• "The Holy Qur'an is the written invitation to the believers to enter Paradise"[1175].

• "A person who continues the habits of pride and oppression can never be happy for there are two sources of happiness:

اَلتَّعْظِيمُ لِأَمْرِ اللهِ وَالشَّفَقَةُ عَلٰى خَلْقِ اللهِ That is:

1) Respect for the commands of Almighty Allah;

2) Compassion and kindness towards all of His creatures..." [1176]

1174. M. Sami Efendi, *Eid Suhbah,* p. 69.
1175. M. Sami Efendi, *Musahaba,* I, 46.
1176. M. Sami Efendi, *ibid,* I, 91.

35. Khwaja Musa Topbas

(May Allah have mercy on him) [1917 - 1999]

Our honourable master, Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him), came to this world in the year 1917 (hijri 1333) during the last days of the Ottoman Empire. He was born in the district of Kadinhani in Konya. His noble father was Ahmad Hamdi Topbas Efendi, and his mother was Lady Adile. Ahmad Hamdi Efendi's grandfather was Ahmad Kudsi Efendi (d. 1887), a great scholar of hadith and a *wali* of Allah who had obtained his *khilafah* from Muhammad Kudsi Bozkiri who was the successor of Khalid Baghdadi.

Topbaszade Ahmad Hamdi Efendi was a man of the heart, pious and selfless, who concerned himself with the problems of the community. Approximately six months after the birth of Musa Efendi, he migrated to Istanbul. Musa Efendi's childhood and youth was spent in the suburb of Erenkoy in Istanbul. His primary, middle school and two years of high school coincided with the first years of the new Republic. At a time when the truths of religion and Islamic heritage were being rejected outright, his honourable father directed him towards trade to protect his heart from corrupt ideas and currents. Musa Efendi had a great passion to study and he began to complete both the outer and inner sciences by taking private lessons from the leading scholars of the time. He studied under many great and honourable men such as the greatest commentator of that time, Elmalili Muhammed Hamdi Yazir, the famous scholar of hadith, Babanzade Ahmed Naim Efendi, and the literary scholar Tahiru al-Mawlawi. He attended the circles of precious scholars such as Omer Nasuhi Bilmen, Bekir Haki Efendi, Mustafa Asim Yoruk and Haci

Cemal Ogut. After gaining an interest in tasawwuf he began to frequently visit the leading spiritual men of that time, including Nuri Efendi from Sariyer, Abdulhay Efendi, Seyyid Sefik Arvasi, Ali Haydar Efendi, Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan and Said Nursi. Some of them he served and received their prayers.

However, the scholar and gnostic who had the greatest influence on his life was undoubtedly Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu (may Allah have mercy on them both). After meeting this great man, an endless horizon opened up before Musa Efendi. He was now a new person and felt in his spirit an unprecedented state of otherworldliness and a fire began to burn within him.

The love and devotion Musa Efendi felt for his teacher was indescribable. His following words are a witness to this love:

“After affiliating myself with Sami Efendi, my whole outlook and perspective on life changed completely. I stopped loving those things I had loved before. I had friends whom I used to eat and drink with every day; they were all wiped away. They neither called on me nor did I call on them...”

When I first entered the presence of my revered teacher Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu, I knew nothing about tasawwuf. I thought he would give me some *awrad* and I would perform them and that was it. I had no idea about spiritual change... However, it was then that I realised that they inspire in the heart a strong love. The traveller, if they are truly intelligent and understanding, realises the value in this and preserves that state of love. As for the one who is a little deficient, even if he benefits his perfection is limited”[1177].

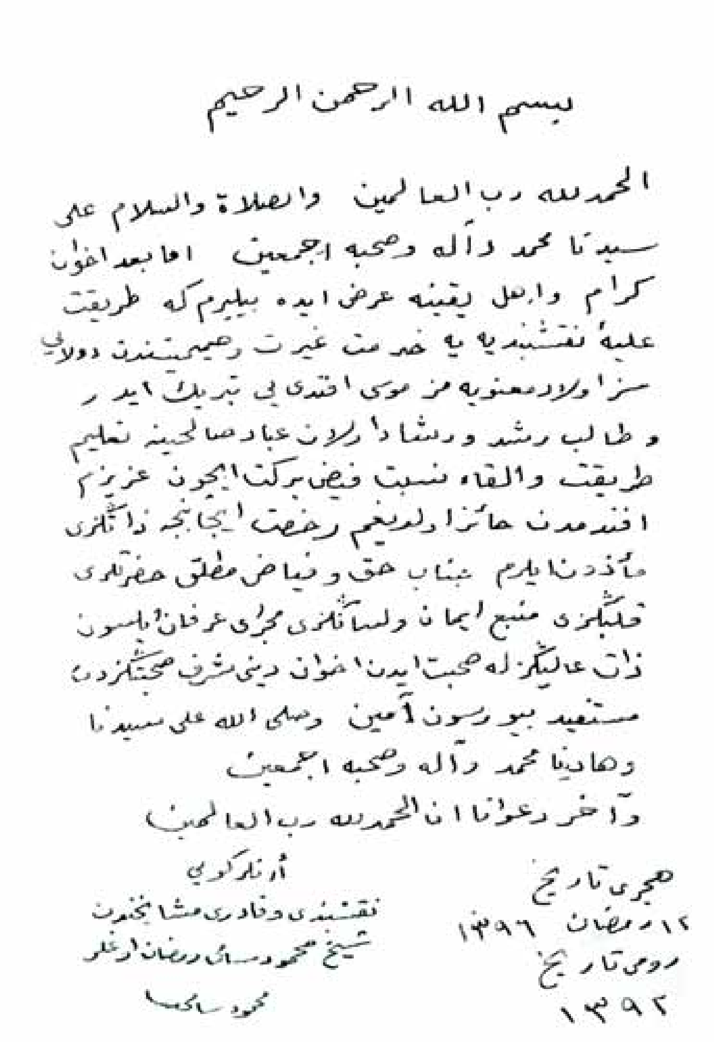
Those who knew Musa Efendi well watched and admired his admiration for his teacher Sami Efendi, his deep love, his submission, his respect and his service of him. Even after the death of his master, it was almost as if he continued to live with him.

Beginning in the year 1956, this spiritual journey was crowned in the year 1976 when he was given his ijaza to guide others. In 1984, on the 12th of February, when his master Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) passed away, he became the new perfected guide, under the indication and

1177. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah: Suhbah with Khwaja Musa Topbas Efendi* prep by. Erkam Publications, 1999, p. 45, 58.

desire of his teacher, and began to carry out the duty of spiritually guiding the travellers on the path of Truth/Reality.

The following is the certificate presented to Musa Efendi, by the Sultan of gnostics, Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu:



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه اجمعين اما بعد اخوان
كرام واهل يقينه عرض ايده بيليرم كه طريقت
عليهٔ نقشبنديه يه خدمت غيرت وصميميتندن دولايى
سزاوار معنويه مز موسى افندى يى تبريك ايدر
و طالب رشد و ارشاد اولان عباد صالحينه تعليم
طريقت والقاء نسبت فيض بركت ايچون عزيزم
افندمدن حائز اولديغم رخصت ايجابنجه ذاتلرى
مأذون ايلدم جناب حق و فياض مطلق حضرتلرى
قلبلرى منبع ايمان ولسانلرى مجراى عرفان ايلسون
ذات عاليلرى ايله صحبت ايدن اخوان دينى شرف صحبتلرندن
مستفيد بيورسون آمين وصلى الله على سيدنا
وهادينا محمد وآله وصحبه اجمعين
وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

ارناؤدكويى
نقشبندى وقادرى مشايخندن
شيخ محمود سامى رمضان اوغلو
محمود سامى

هجرى تاريخ
١٢ رمضان ١٣٩٦
رومى تاريخ
١٣٩٢

A simplified version of it is as follows:

"In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, and His family and all of his Companions. After this:

I would like to openly declare the following matter to our precious brothers and the people of certainty:

We congratulate you, our spiritual son Musa Efendi due to your service, efforts and sincerity in the Naqshibandiyya way.

From the licence given me by my precious master, I now give you permission to train those who wish to enter upon the path of guidance and perfect themselves, and teach the principles of this tariq to the righteous servants of Allah, thereby allowing them to attain the prosperity and blessings of this elevated tariq.

May Allah, Most High, the sole source of all prosperity and blessings make your heart a source of faith, and your tongue a river of wisdom. May He allow those brothers of ours who keep company with you to benefit from your noble words. Amen!

Peace and blessings be upon our Master and Guide, Muhammad, on all of his ahl al bayt *and Companions. Our final prayer is 'All praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds'.*

His beautiful character

There was a certain dignity and majesty present in the stance of Musa Efendi. He would instil in the hearts of those who saw him, love and awe at the same time. Hidden in his beauty was a certain kind of majesty and hidden in his majesty was a certain beauty. Those who saw his blessed face were reminded of Allah, and felt the beauty and honour of servanthood.

The deep love in his heart was reflected on his face and he would look upon everything with love. There was a pleasure to be found in his words. His voice was as soft as silk and his words were full of wisdom. He would speak little but very concisely and would not draw out his words unnecessarily but

only say what needed to be said. His words were like dewdrops filtered from a clover leaf which fell upon the heart of those who listened to him and were like the water of life for those hearts thirsty for divine wisdom and truth.

Adab, grace and kindness were felt in his every state. It was as if he was born with this state of gentlemanliness. There was a nobility in the way he stood, sat, and walked.

His dress was very clean, beautiful and simple. He did not like untidiness and his soft glance would change immediately (if he saw any).

From the cap on his head to the shoes on his feet, from the scarf around his neck to his coat, everything he wore had a certain grace, proportion and beauty. He was a sight to see especially when he was in the Haramayn and covered in white.

Some of his sweetest memories that remain in the hearts of his disciples are the awe, reverence and peace felt in his prayer; his grace and subtlely in giving gifts, making offers to others; his calmness and presence when eating; the grace in which he held a glass; the way he caressed a young child's head with love.

The gentlemanly way in which he addressed people, the sincerity of his relations with people, the compassion and kindness overflowing from his heart, the depth of his silence and the ocean-like greatness of his generosity, were all of an indescribable beauty. He had an extremely good memory. He never forgot a person he met for the first time.

His loyalty was legendary. He was ever loyal to Almighty Allah, to His Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), to his honoured teacher, to his blessed ancestors and to those who loved him. This is why he was known amongst those who loved him by the term 'The loyal one' (Sahib-ul vefa).

In short, he was beautiful both in appearance and in character. His servanthood to Allah throughout his entire life flowed over to all aspects of his life and was reflected in his every state and act. In truth he was:

A beautiful servant in worship,

A beautiful servant in his interactions with others,

A beautiful servant in distributing justice,

A beautiful servant in showing love and kindness to other creatures for the sake of their Creator,

A beautiful servant in striving to be a compassionate healer for the pain and hardships of others,

A beautiful servant in his witnessing, with awe, the divine power and majesty throughout the universe,

A beautiful servant who left behind a beautiful memory with his grace and gentle heart!

He placed great importance on spiritual training

Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) believed that spiritual education was absolutely essential and would remind his brothers of this truth at every opportunity.

He would say:

“Even if a person spent their entire life in prostration and fasting, all they would gain would be the reward for this. Spiritual progress, however, can only occur through the path of *sayr u suluq*. Through this journey a person comes to know their *nafs* (they understand how powerless they are). When they know their *nafs* they begin to know Allah, Most High. It is only those who know their *nafs* who can know Allah. Those who do not know their *nafs* will never be able to reach a state of perfection, no matter how much of an ascetic they are, no matter how much they worship, or how much knowledge they have’.

Once a person comes to know and understand the nature of their *nafs*, the meaning behind everything changes. It is then that they begin to refer everything back to Almighty Allah. Whatever happens they say ‘this is a favour of Allah’ and they accept it. This is because their outlook has changed, their every act becomes an act of worship. A servant who begins to know Almighty Allah and who wishes to obtain wealth now does so for a different reason. Before this he would have been struggling with the thoughts of his *nafs*, saying to himself: “I want to be wealthy, eat and drink and buy a home so every-

one will applaud me". However, now, as he grows spiritually, he begins to say: "I can now lawfully provide for my family with the wealth given to me by Allah, and I can serve the community of Islam. Consequently, since his intention has changed, his worldly work now becomes worship. Once a person's thoughts are always focused on Allah, their every act becomes worship. Their eating, sleeping, relations with their family all become acts of worship..."[1178]

"Once a person enters the path of spirituality their enthusiasm and love increases. Nothing is now too difficult for them. Worship and avoiding the haram all become pleasurable. Enduring hardships becomes possible and easy through accepting fate and destiny. There is nothing that can block the path of spirituality for the one who is willing and aspiring"[1179].

"Allah Most High opens the way for those servants of His whom He loves and who has the potential to be a *wali*. The traveller who enters upon this path must know with certainty that he will be able to reach the ranks of the great *awliya* through sincerity, perseverance and striving. Our path is the path of the great *awliya*. Since it is such we must prepare ourselves for it accordingly. Since Almighty Allah has given us great *awliya* such as Bahauddin Naqshiband, Abdulqadir Geylani, and Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu, and since we are on their path, if we abide by *adab* and sincerity, we will also attain a degree of those beautiful bounties, if Allah so wills. Since we love them and we are on their path; Almighty Allah will give us the same as long as we strive, for Allah's treasure is wide indeed. Let us do this work seriously and willingly so that we can advance"[1180].

"The entire essence of the matter is dependent on the person abandoning their ego. Once a person annihilates their *nafs* then they will be able to advance in the way of perfection. On the surface it seems so easy, but it is extremely difficult to abandon one's *nafs*. Once one overcomes one's *nafs*, everything becomes a source of calm and peace; everyone becomes a friend. Such a person harbours love in their heart and a good opinion of everyone, and the Muslims in particular"[1181].

1178. See Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* V, 42.
1179. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* V, 45.
1180. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* V, 45; VI, 24, 65, 98; *Sultan al Arifin,* p. 55.
1181. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 172.

"Once a person has reached Allah, they have attained everything. If they have not been able to reach Him, they will have nothing of any value, even if they are famed throughout the world, or the whole world applauds them"[1182].

Some important matters in spiritual education

Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"What is looked for firstly in those who seek the spiritual path are generosity, honesty, modesty, a big heart, gentleness, getting along with everybody, sincerity and uprightness.

What is looked for secondly is striving, genuineness, and sacrifice...

The shaykh does not immediately accept everyone who applies to the path of *sayr u suluq*. He looks at his character and appearance. If he finds his intentions to be sincere and has the potential for spiritual growth, he performs the *istikhara* and if he sees no potential, he delays it. Their aim is not to just gather anyone, but rather to determine those who are capable and help them reach perfection"[1183].

"Undoubtedly the main successes in this elevated path are sincerity, modesty and striving and effort. Those who take up these, those who are careful and seek the pleasure of Allah will be successful in gaining it. When those who wish to benefit from this elevated path use the willpower given to them by Allah in the best way, and act with great determination and wisdom they will begin to smell the essence of reality bestowed upon them by Almighty Allah.

For this to occur, the following conditions are needed:

1) The aim in servanthood must be purely for the sake of Allah, with no desire for reward.

2) One must abide by the commands of the Holy Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and seriously avoid their prohibitions.

1182. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 46.
1183. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* I, 40-41.

3) One should take care in particular to earn one's livelihood by lawful means. There are many people today who are considered to be pious but who are in no way God-fearing at all because their earnings are doubtful.

4) One should submit completely to a competent perfected guide. In reality, one is actually submitting to Almighty Allah. A person benefits more from their submission than their worship. A traveller whose submission is lacking, will not progress properly.

5) One should perform one's *awrad* with great care, devoting their heart to Allah, and in the manner shown to them by their *murshid*.

6) One should continue to attend the *suhbah* of their *murshid* or their brothers.

7) One should take care in preserving one's state, in eradicating love of this world, in acting in contrary to the wishes of the *nafs*, and developing and beautifying one's character.

8) One should enter the path of service with loyalty. Every person can serve the believers, in fact, they can serve all of the creatures, in accordance with their potential and capacity and according to the requirements of the time[1184].

"Many people think that advancing spiritually is only through much worship. No, indeed true progress is to know that one is in the presence of Almighty Allah, and do whatever is required by the Sunnah of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). There are many people who are always performing supererogatory worship; but they do not care about what is lawful or unlawful, and do not strive to attain an Islamic character. They spend their free time gossiping and back biting others. They use whatever they obtain in order to fulfil the wishes of their *nafs*. If only such people would reduce their supererogatory worship and be more aware of and strive to have good character and abide by the rights of others"[1185].

Another matter that our revered teacher would remind those who loved him of is as follows:

1184. See one of the letters he wrote to those who loved him, in *Altınoluk,* issue: 162, p. 6, August 1999; Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* I, 52-53; III, 210.

1185. Sadiq Dana, *Sultan al Arifin,* p. 19-20.

"One should know this well that just as there is no limit to servanthood there is also no end to the *sayr u suluq*. Those who say: "I am finished" are still half way on the path and those who see their own faults have progressed. The traveller who says: "I have come to the stage of '*muhabbah'* and my spiritual training is complete", and sees himself as sufficient will have erred"[1186].

That is, the believer should not remain where he is no matter what degree he has reached, but strive to advance even further.

Our noble teacher summarised all of these conditions as follows:

"As a result we should know this matter well: Our salvation, our peace and happiness can only be through completely following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in every circumstance, with our every breath, our every step, our every state and act, to colour ourselves with his colours, to adopt his character, and to strive to never part from his blessed Sunnah"[1187].

His manner of guiding others

With his own personality Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) displayed a model life of servanthood. His whole concern was to be a sincere servant of Allah, above all else. From time to time he would say:

"A person should think as such: In this world there is my Lord and then there is only me as His servant. I should act out my servanthood accordingly".

This feeling of his would inspire in those who loved him the enthusiasm and zeal to become a servant of Allah.

Musa Efendi established the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah at the foundation of spiritual training. According to him, any system of training that was not based on these two sources would not reform the human being, but rather corrupt him. In fact, the reason for being of the spiritual path is to completely combine these two sources. He expressed this as follows:

"Every act which does not conform with the commands and prohibitions of Allah, Most High, that is, are not in harmony with the rulings of the Qur'an,

1186. See Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, I, 43; V, 79.
1187. Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, I, 184.

is false and misguided... First of all are the rulings of the Holy Qur'an. That is the foundation and does not change; for if a person has no sharia, they have nothing...What we must do is to concern ourselves completely with the commands of Almighty Allah. We must be persistent in knowing and following what Allah commanded, what He has forbidden. This is the first step in spiritual progress. If one does not take care at the first step, then one cannot benefit from spirituality"[1188].

On the other hand, divine and prophetic training has always been founded on love and compassion. Musa Efendi loved everyone and also offered love to the hearts as if they were the source of life.

He would say:

"The greatest gift given to us by Allah Almighty is love. To love Allah, His Messenger, the friends of Allah, one's brothers, the believers, animals... love, love, love... it follows one after the other..."

Allah, Most High, places love for Himself in the heart of the servant that He loves, and that He wishes to make precious and noble. If that servant then recognises the worth in this and uses it well, that is with complete sincerity and embarks upon the path of submission, doing whatever is required of him, the veils will open up for him. A state of familiarity with Allah will manifest with ease. He will then have found what he was looking for and this is a divine favour from our Lord. Sometimes this state can be achieved through the attentive glance of a sincere servant; that is a perfect guide. However this is rare.

The glance of the *murshid-i kamil* does not influence everyone, but only those who Allah wills, and only a few of those even, who are serious and sincere in every matter and who have extremely good character and have reached a state of perfection...The one who reaches this state of love carries out their duties towards Allah, Most High, willingly and with great ease and presence of heart. Some worshippers do not feel complete pleasure and presence in their worship due to a deficiency of love in their hearts"[1189].

In the eyes of Musa Efendi, every human being was precious. However, this value did not come from his fame, rank, wealth or lineage. He was pre-

1188. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 98; IV, 84; V, 40.
1189. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, V, 22, 80-81.

cious only because he was a servant of Allah. Those who loved him and who were esteemed and loved by him each felt that they had a special place in his heart and eyes, and felt the warmth of being loved by them in their hearts.

Whatever the age of social standing, he would call everybody by respectful and polite titles such as '*efendi'*, or '*bey'*, or 'brother'.

To those who loved him he would show his love for them sometimes through gifts, sometimes through visits and sometimes in other ways. It would not be an exaggeration to say that everyone who loved him had a gift given to them by him – some rose oil, a prayer mat, some fabric, a rosary bead, a prayer cap, special gifts on holy nights, a greeting, a work of calligraphy, a flower... Each of them was graceful and delicate, just as the '*efendi'* who presented them.

In short, he knew how to enter a person's heart and he loved to please others. In various ways, he would satisfy the hearts of those who loved him. He would say: "We must start somewhere with everyone in order to save them"[1190].

From time to time, Musa Efendi would politely remind those who loved him or who served him of their mistakes in order to train and educate them and he would explain how to do something.

From time to time he would also become angry. Generally this would be due to an act that was against the will of Allah or a foolish act. However, his anger was contained within his beauty. This is why nobody was ever offended or hurt by his warnings and cautions.

He would caution people by attracting them towards him and by approaching them, not by pushing them away and ostracising them.

From time to time, our noble master would enter into a deep silence, in order to apply some methods of special training for our brothers of wisdom. Those near him would benefit spiritually from this long state of silence and not be able to hold back their tears. Their hearts would enter another world.

1190. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah, p*. 10.

He gave much importance to the *suhbah*

Musa Efendi placed the *suhbah* at the centre of his guiding others. If three members of his family got together he would not allow them any vain talk and say “We deserve a *suhbah’*. One time when he had to stay in hospital he gave a *suhbah* to those who stayed with him, which left an unforgettable memory on those who were there.

Musa Efendi would remind people that they should attend the *suhbah* with the enthusiasm of worship. In his eyes, the *suhbah* was not just an ordinary meeting, but a spiritual and elevated assembly. He would say:

“Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) perfected his blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) through his *suhbah* at the ‘*suffa’* of his mosque. Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshiband and his peers gave great importance to *suhbah* and the great saints (may Allah have mercy on them all) were trained and educated at these spiritual study houses. There are great mysteries within the *suhbah* from the aspect of inner and outer knowledge.

If *suhbah* is carried out solely for the sake of Allah, with no other expectations or worldly benefits, the angels will join in that assembly...these *suhbahs* strengthen the familiarity, sincerity, love and *muhabbah* amongst the believers. No matter how much those who do not attend the *suhbah* fulfil their *wird* there will not be any reciprocal love. The traveller should continue his nightly *awrad* and not neglect to attend the *suhbah*. They say that the *suhbah* is the completer of *dhikr* and *awrad*. Any person who continues to attend these spiritual *suhbahs* with sincerity, on condition that he performs his *awrad* regularly, will no longer have any place in their heart for love of this world, and will not even have love in his heart for the hereafter. There will be room left only for love of Allah.

The one who loves Allah will be honest, upright and carry out their religious and worldly duties. Through the *suhbah*, the dirt from this world and love for it will be removed from the heart. Their place will be filled with love for Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). Even though those who attend are tired and weary when they first arrive, they leave having no trace of their previous fatigue or weariness...they are fresh and filled with peace. Once love of Allah enters a heart, everything is complete.

The pleasure and joy received from a *suhbah* that is in accordance with proper manners (*adab)* is indescribable. Those who are there delve into presence and peace. If, in particular, the person who performs the *suhbah* is competent, through his providence, love, respect, sincerity, all kinds of blessings manifest amongst those who are present. However much one abides by *adab*, Almighty Allah increases one's success and blessings"[1191].

This is because Musa Efendi gave great importance to the heart in spiritual training he would always make this the topic of his *suhbah*. The expression 'give one's heart to Allah' was a sweet term very often repeated by him.

He himself would serve others first

Musa Efendi did not like laziness and lassitude. He would give continual reminders that *tasawwuf* was not about retreating into a corner and said that there was some service every person could perform according to their opportunity and capacity;

"Every person should do what they can. For instance a teacher should strive to educate a student in the best way... An architect should build beautiful mosques, and houses in harmony with the principles of Islam. There is something everyone can do.

Everyone should allocate their time to carrying out the most beneficial task in accordance with their capacity... Some people are able to perform much worship...Some people are people of courage...when you gather them all, they all amount to the same goal but their ways are different... even an ill person has a duty to do. If an ill person refrains from thinking about themselves only, they can pray for the well-being of the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) if they are capable of nothing else.

Some people advance through *salat*. Some people like fasting. Some people advance through acquiring wisdom, others through publishing. Publishing Islamic books and journals, in particular, is one of the most leading acts of service in these times..."[1192]

1191. See Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, V, 43-44, 57-59; VI, 64, 67, 94-95, 100; *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 76.

1192. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 103, 180-181.

“Many people are at ease believing that they have carried out their religious duties because they pray and fast. However, this is not enough. In addition to abiding by and respecting the commands of Allah, we should also be compassionate towards all creatures. This can only be achieved through sacrifice and sincere service. Thus, every Muslim, with a sound mind, should be beneficial to and serve the society they are in after having carried out their obligatory acts. Those who do not serve with their bodies, their minds or their wealth, solely for the sake of Allah, cannot attain the state of being a perfected believer. These things that we have enumerated complete the obligatory acts and are from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)...

If our financial situation is suitable we need to open our wallets. Miserliness is not an acceptable thing for those who are travelling the path of Allah. If we have knowledge we need to find those who are capable of receiving it and distribute it to them. If a person wants to serve, Allah gives him the opportunity. Whatever our profession, we can benefit the society through it and in every other matter. We can visit our neighbours, and our sick. We can participate in funerals. Once a person makes the intention, there are many other sweet and good deeds to be done...

Some of us are reluctant to serve the community because we fear our state of presence (*huzur*) will be harmed. This is one of the wiles of the *nafs*. The real skill is being able to continue our prayers, our service and be in a state of togetherness with Allah”[1193].

Musa Efendi stated that *adab* in serving others is more important than the act of serving itself and indicated the following subtle matters that needed to be taken into consideration;

“As people who serve others continue in this path, they need to adopt the virtue of *i’sar* (preferring their believing brothers and sisters over themselves). Those who insist on carrying out all acts of service themselves will tire quickly, they will become constricted and their approach will change. They begin to belittle everyone else. May Allah protect them; they will recede in their state. They will become a slave to love of leadership”[1194].

1193. See Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, III, 117, 167; V, 78-79.
1194. Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 248.

Before encouraging his relatives and disciples to serve others, our teacher demonstrated this first himself. His support and encouragement can be found in many establishments and institutions. He always supported Quran courses, Imam Hatip high schools, mosques and similar places. For instance he himself took the lead in establishing Erkam Publications in 1980 and of the Aziz Mahmud Hudayi Foundation in Uskudar in 1985, and the publication of the Altinoluk magazine in 1986. He supported these both financially and spiritually. He also led the way in many similar establishments.

He would warn those who served in such charitable institutions that they should not become lax just because they are working in such places and neglect their own spiritual progress. He would say:

"The one in the duty of serving others must advance spiritually as long as they are in this service. One should give one's heart to one's Lord and strive to perfectly carry out one's duty of servanthood to Him with sincerity, *adab* and humility. Otherwise those people of service that are not suitable to spirituality and this method, if they do not develop and advance their spirit, their service will lose its spirit...Because his intention is weak he will be deprived of the help of Almighty Allah"[1195].

Musa Efendi strove to help the community of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and strove to do whatever he could to solve all kinds of problems. One time he described the painful and heartrending state of the Muslim youth who had strayed from their religion and showed some necessary solutions. However he was unable to quell the fire in his heart and he prayed to his Lord as follows:

"O Great of greats, of Elevated of elevated ones, o Allah whose power and might is infinite! We see the intensity of the fire and we perceive its terror. We weep but our hands are tied and we can do nothing. We are bewildered and do not know what to do..."[1196]

1195. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* II, 237.
1196. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* IV, 167.

Guiding others through his letters

Our honourable teacher would use letters as a method of training and guiding others. Here are some extracts from his letters as an example;

"My dear child!

…Serving others spiritually occupies a great place in the spiritual path. Those in this path of service (who await nothing in return) will be raised to great ranks, on the condition that they are sincere, upright, compassionate towards their peers, and courteous...No person of Allah can be conceived of as being insincere and lacking in modesty... Hearts are conquered through courtesy and mildness, and love increases. Those who are gentle and treat others with gentleness and mildness will be of the chosen ones. Allah loves them and will make His servants love them also...

What is written here is only a small part and for those people of wisdom there are many fine mysteries to be perceived. Esrefoglu Rumi said:

"Let those who are capable of hearing without seeing the moving of the lips come!"[1197]

Sincerity and uprightness

Musa Efendi sought out sincerity in every matter. He would say:

"The entire essence of the matter, the best principle is sincerity! The most important affair that everybody should take careful note of is to ask Allah for sincerity. If there is sincerity in an assembly, then there is everything. If there is no sincerity, it makes no difference how many books are read, how many Quranic commentaries etc. are studied, there will be no benefit or blessings. In my prayers I always pray as such: "O my Lord increase me in my sincerity!" Sincerity is the best thing. Almighty Allah bestows everything in abundance on the one who is sincere"[1198].

1197. *Altinoluk,* issue: 162, p. 6, Ağustos 1999.
1198. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 181.

After one gathering, money was collected to help those in Bosnia-Hersek. After everyone gave a certain amount of money in aid, Musa Efendi took out a large amount of money and said:

“This is from a friend who entrusted it to me to give it here”. Except for the people of insight present there, everyone assumed that someone who could not attend the gathering sent this money. However the trust was in fact his own money and the ‘friend’ was Almighty Allah.

Musa Efendi lived by the principle that “Uprightness is a never-ending obligatory act” and lived in accordance with the standard of the Qur’an and the Sunnah. The most defining principles in his life were undoubtedly sincerity and uprightness. This is why these were the greatest wonders he displayed.

A life of reverent and zealous worship

Another of the key principles in the life of Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was undoubtedly reverence. As a result of the degree of *marifatullah* he reached in his life, he was in a state of utmost reverence and awe of Allah. He would say: “Worship can take one to Paradise; worship carried out in reverence can take one to Allah”. He would link the blessings and benefits of worship to the reverence shown during it.

He experienced great pleasure and delights from his servanthood and expressed this in an endless sense of gratitude as follows:

“Thanks be to Almighty Allah, He made us His servant, and made us from the community of His Beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and directed us to this beautiful and elevated path. There can be no greater happiness. *Alhamdulillah* again and again...”[1199]

He would say that worship should be done solely for Allah and with great zeal:

“If a person, as a servant of Allah, abides by the commands of Allah, in every matter, he will reach great ranks. However, we should not be lovers of rank. We do whatever Allah has commanded us to, willingly and happily and we shun whatever Allah has forbidden us, willingly and happily. We

1199. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, V, 76.

will continue to serve Him. As we continue to do so, our Lord will bestow upon us beautiful states. In this way, by His permission, we will have saved ourselves"[1200].

When it was time to pray, Musa Efendi would wear his best robe and put on his whitest of white cap. He would scent himself with the most beautiful fragrance and offer some to those around him. He would then wait in reverence for the *adhan*. He would take care to lay down his prayer mat as neatly as possible. He would not allow anything to distract his heart nor his eye.

His reverence for the *adhan* was something else. He would respond to the call, as advised by the Sunnah, and listen to it in peace and then make the *adhan* prayer in reverence.

After performing the prayer with all its requirements and proper *adab*, you could hear the phrase 'alhamdulillah' coming from his blessed lips with a subtlety that soothed the soul, as if he had drunk cold water on a very hot day.

The reverence and sensitivity he showed for prayer could also be observed in his other acts of worship. Especially during the month of Ramadan, at the *iftar* meals that he offered at the Haramayn, prepared with the utmost care, the deep state of contemplation he entered when performing hajj, the respect and reverence he felt when visiting the grave of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), his familiarity and friendship with the Book of Allah, the endless gratitude, courtesy and sense of entrustment he felt when giving *sadaqa* and *zakat*, all came from his reverence and respect for Almighty Allah.

His deep love

Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was a great friend of Allah, who imbued divine love. His heart was an ocean of love. Love flowed from his tongue and his eyes. Like As'ad Efendi, who had recognised his worth as a child, he said: "O my Lord! I have lost my senses out of my love for you, but I have no fame". How else can the following letter be understood, which he wrote to one of his spiritual sons:

1200. Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, V, 82.

"I am utterly powerless, and full of faults; my only consolation is this: I love the beloveds of Allah more than my own life, existence and everything. This is such a love that I am not even aware of it. It cannot be expressed in words or writing"[1201].

Our noble guide desired that his love and ardour for Almighty Allah increase even more and asked for this in his prayers. The following supplication is an example of this:

"O Highest of Highs, o Allah! To You belong glory, honour, might, power and all elevated attributes. How can we, as created beings, perceive Your subtle artwork and unlimited deep character. Allow our windows of foresight to open so that we can perceive You if only a little in accordance with our capacity.

Increase our love so that we can carry out our servanthood with great enthusiasm and *adab*. Perfection is Yours; defect and faults belong to us. Forgive us and do not punish us for our mistakes. O Allah! We seek refuge in Your forgiveness, Mercy, and Clemency. Treat us not with Your justice, but with Your grace"[1202].

"O Lord! Do not deprive us of the bounty of love! Everything emerges through Your love, is given life, and finds strength. O Lord! Make beloved to us those You love. Just as You have made the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) beloved to us, let us love every friend that is worthy of love. Make us the dirt on the feet of all of the *ahl al bayt*, the blessed Companions and those who love Islam and serve it.

O Lord! We love You through You.

And it is again through You that we love that which You love.

It is through You that we love those who love You.

And it is again through You that we love those who love those who love You"[1203].

1201. "From his letters", *Altinoluk*, Issue: 162, p. 5, Ağustos 1999.
1202. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* II, 86.
1203. Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 189-190.

Our noble guide would frequently emphasise the importance of directing the potential for love one has in one's nature in the right direction and he would draw the boundaries of love. He would place at the centre, love for Allah and then other loves were connected to that. He would say:

"When we talk about love, what we first think of is the Creator of the Universe. Then we remember the Beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Then come the other prophets, the Companions, and the friends of Allah ... We love the believers, we love animals, we love and love and love...love follows one after the other...

The one who loves Allah, Most High, cannot love other than Him, in the true sense he will have no strength left. His other loves will continue; for instance he will love his mother and father and his family and children and his wealth and property. However this love will be a measured and proportionate love that arises out of his love for Allah. Such proportionate loves are acceptable. It is a requirement of being a human being that a person shows love to his fellow human being. A person loves his mother and father, because they were the means for him coming into this world and for him learning his religious knowledge.

He loves his dignified, virtuous family. If this love is for Allah then it too is acceptable...When it comes to wealth and property, if he spends them in the way of Islam and for the benefit of other people, then this is praiseworthy. When a person's love is perfected, he loves only that which Allah loves. He does not love those who Allah abhors, the enemies of Allah, and the idolaters, and in fact he too abhors them"[1204].

Musa Efendi also said that love would bring a person's servanthood to the peak of pleasure and delight and would fill his life with peace:

"Those who truly love Allah can make this world a Paradise. Their hearts are filled with so much love for Allah, which encompasses them to such a degree, that they can see nothing amiss. They love, love, love and love again. Every other topic apart from love will constrict them and take away their peace...When this love is transformed into enthusiasm and ardour it will bring

1204. .See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 164; V, 21-23, 80-81; VI, 106.

the person to a state of ecstasy. For now he is removed from the picture, and exists only through that which he loves...

The gnostics have expressed this state well when they say: "When you are removed from the picture what is left behind is your Creator".

The one who attains love will carry out their duties to Allah willingly and with great pleasure, ease and peace of heart"[1205].

Compassion and Mercy

Musa Efendi's deep and profound love made him an ocean and model of compassion and mercy. His embracing compassion was a source of consolation for the poor, orphans, lonely, ill, and sinners, who sought salvation, and in fact all other creatures.

He loved everyone and everything except for the known enemies of Allah. This love of his would flow forth in the form of compassion and mercy from his hand, his tongue, and his eyes. When looking at a rose, when caressing a child, when offering some food for the cats in the garden or the gulls that perched on the trees... one could witness this state always. He would say:

"The Divine name *ar-Rahman* is one of the elevated attributes of Almighty Allah. Mercy is the attribute of the prophets of Allah, the blessed Companions, the great *awliyaullah*, the gnostics (*arif*) and the lovers of Allah.

Allah, Most High, loves the compassionate person and the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the *awliyaullah* and all the people, in fact all of creation loves the compassionate person...

People draw near to Allah through the degree of their compassion... As the servant takes care and is perfected, Almighty Allah gives them compassion and love towards all creatures. If a person has no compassion for creation then that person is in great loss. A person cannot be a servant of Allah, in His path and not have compassion for the people that He created – and even the animals - he would be incomplete"[1206].

Musa Efendi loved the poor and needy. He would say:

1205. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 164, 189; V, 22.
1206. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, I, 191, 192; V, 80.

"If we cannot love the poor let us implore Allah that He give us this feeling of love for them. There are many devotees in our time who cannot love the poor due to a lack of compassion in their hearts...

Whereas if the people of *tawakkul* and *tafwiz* (those who submit themselves and their affair totally to Allah) knew the worth of the poor in the sight of Allah, we would want to kiss their feet... Our duty is to love them, be kind to them and gain their prayers" [1207].

If was almost as if Musa Efendi's pure nature was moulded with compassion. He was deeply saddened when he could not physically work in his Hudayi clinic that he established for the poor and would say:

"If I had the strength I would go and help and serve the ill people personally".

Another group of people he extended his compassion to were sinners who had fallen into the pits of sin. Undoubtedly he would abhor the sin but he would have pity on the sinner. He would not allow his dislike of the sin to flow over onto the sinner. He would pray for such people so that they would be freed from their state and he would help them as much as he could. A friend from Bursa narrates the following story which demonstrates this beautiful state of his:

"Our noble teacher loved Bursa very much and from time to time, he would reside in the homes found along the path of Uludag for a period of a week or ten days. Since it was an isolated place and there was some anarchy during that period, as a precaution he and some brothers would be on guard during the night in the courtyard of the house. One night around three o'clock in the morning, a man jumped down into the courtyard from the surrounding wall. He turned to the door and tried to open it; when he could not he went for the window. He had evil intentions. I immediately caught him and laid him down on the ground. It was our master's habit to pray the *tahajjud* prayer at that time and do some *dhikr* and so he was generally awake at that time. I wanted to inform him of the situation so I rang the bell. He appeared at the door a little while later.

1207. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, III, 123, 127.

When he saw the man lying on the ground he realised what had happened and he went inside to put something on and came out to the courtyard. It was summer so he went out to the pergola and sat the man next to him and asked him why he inclined to such an illegal act. The man apologised saying that he was unemployed and he was forced to obtain some money for his children in order to provide for them. Our noble master was extremely saddened by this. He went back inside and brought back a tray of food and said:

"You must also be hungry; let us fill your stomach first". He then began to advise him gently. He later handed him an envelope with a large amount of money and said:

"You can meet your immediate needs with this for now. (Then pointing to me) he said "By the will of Allah this friend will help you find work as soon as possible. If you have nothing preventing you, every week you can also attend our talks which this brother will show you". He did not leave it at that but, to crown his compassion and kindness he said:

"It will be hard for you to walk home now our brother will take you home by car". He then turned to me and cautioned me as follows:

"Brother! We shall not disclose what this friend did. Let it remain a secret between us until the end of time".

This brother whose name will remain a secret with me for all time, was then settled in a job. He continued to attend the weekly *suhbah* and finally achieved a peaceful family life. He is now a man of great spirituality and has joined us as our teary-eyed brother, all praise be to Allah"[1208].

His epic loyalty

Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) was a great *wali* of Allah who bore the beautiful traits of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). However his trait of loyalty was something else. This is why the people of wisdom gave him the title of 'the Loyal one' (*sahib al wafa*)

He was loyal as a servant of Allah. For an entire lifetime he was faithful to the promise he made to his Lord before our creation when Allah Almighty

1208. A special note written and sent by Muzaffer Işıkveren Bey.

asked us ‘Am I not your Lord?’: in the ‘*alast bazmi*[1209]’. *He would frequently repeat the verse:* **“He is with you wherever you are**…’ (Hadid, 57:4) and he lived his entire life, and his worship in particular, with a complete feeling of *ihsan*, that is with the knowledge, *adab* and peace of being constantly under divine watch.

His loyalty to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was something else again. During his long years in Madina he would go to the Masjid an Nabi, usually to perform the *tahajjud* prayer, and visit his rose-scented Blessed Tomb in deep presence and *adab*. Even though the guards of the tomb would hinder a lot of the visitors who came, and were quite harsh at times, they were affected by his profound courtesy and silence. After the visit he would perform the *tahajjud* prayer and then wait in a state of *dhikr* and *muraqaba* until the dawn prayer. During his times of health, he would wait in the Harem in a state of complete presence until the late morning.

He would say that true loyalty to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was by completely embracing his *Sunnah* and that this would be possible by imitating him in form but also learning from his heart.

Another form of his loyalty was to the people of Allah, which was manifested in endless love and devotion to them. He was filled with an epic sense of loyalty towards his master Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu (may Allah have mercy on them both). For him, the most important moments and days of his life were those he spent together with his master. For the entire thirty years that they were together he was totally dedicated to that great *wali* with complete loyalty and made sure to look at life and events through his eyes. He lived his life both outwardly and inwardly with that great *wali* of Allah, he became annihilated in him and at his last breath, it was as if he had become him.

Other examples of his loyalty are the acts of generosity he showed towards the small service of his grandchildren and other close relatives, his sending of chapter Fatiha for each of the greats, friends and beautiful people who served the country and who migrated to the other world, by saying each one’s name separately.

1209. See Chapter A’raf, verse 172

As a personal example, he sought out and found the nurse who had cared for me while I was still a baby. When he found her 55 years later, he gave her gifts and treated her with great respect.

Another example of his profound courtesy, his appreciation of others and his loyalty is this: he would send a gift or a letter every year to each and every doctor that had treated him. He did not neglect to do this even when he was in Madina and he would ring us and have us do it on his behalf.

One of these doctors was extremely moved by this loyalty and appreciation and he said:

"I have treated so many ill people. Some of my patients have thanked me and given me gifts, but this is the first time I have seen a person continue to thank me a year later and in the years to come after".

His generosity and enthusiasm to give out

Finding broken-hearted people and making them happy and seeing to the needs of the needy were two forms of social worship that Musa Efendi carried out with great spiritual pleasure. He gave out in a planned and ordered manner. He was practically an endowment institution in himself. He had different funds for different things. For instance he had an 'orphan' fund. He would allocate a certain amount of money to orphans and give this to his close ones whom he had given this responsibility and say:

"Your job is not just to give them money. However you treat your own children, this is how you should treat these orphans"[1210].

He also had a 'book' fund. Whenever he saw any book, and especially those of Sami Efendi's, which was beneficial for the youth or the community, he would buy many copies and give them as gifts to those he saw fit. He would give out books about Ottoman history and the heroes of Islam to university youth.

Our noble master had an 'illness' fund. He was very sensitive in the service of health. He would concern himself with people who were ill but had

1210. Abdullah Sert, "A Friend of Allah subject to the name of al Wadud", *Altinoluk,* Issue: 245, p. 11, July 2006.

no money or opportunity to buy medicine or be treated and he had given this responsibility to a relative of his who was a doctor. He would take care of their expenses without them being aware.

Musa Efendi would prepare his budget at the beginning of every year in order to determine these various funds. All of these were of course in addition to his obligatory alms (*zakat*) for he wished to give out anything extra after he had taken care of his needs.

He would advise giving out at every opportunity. He would encourage his loved ones and those close to him to spend generously out of the bounties Allah had bestowed on them in the way He willed and would say:

"My child, make sure to live a life of '*riyada*[1211]' and spend what Allah has given you for Him. Let not your state of *riyada* be the state only in the three holy months or Ramadan. Extend it to your entire life and spend what is beyond your needs in the path of Allah. Know well that even if you were living in the Dolmabahce Palace or the Topkapi Palace you would have to live with *riyada*.

That is why you should not carry your wealth and your property in your heart. If you do not give out what is above your needs in the way of Allah, then you will have shown ingratitude for His bounties. Do not forget that that which is not given out is wasted and wasted bounties are a great sin in the hereafter whose weight is very heavy indeed".

In training us, his spiritual children, when we were still young, Musa Efendi would ask us the price of the orange or apple we bought and say:

"Did you search the market to find a cheaper price?"

He would consider it extravagant to pay three lira for the same item which could be bought for two lira. He would thus caution us to be frugal. In short, when he spent on himself, he would split hairs. However, when it came to spending in the way of Allah he would take great pleasure from giving out generously.

1211. Riyada: To make do with just enough when partaking of bounties for oneself and thus controlling one's nafs.

I still have a notebook with me left by him. In it are his notes about alms, charity and good deeds. From time to time my honourable father would show it to me only – in order to avoid showing off - and would explain:

"Look son, my alms is this much and my other voluntary charity is this much..."

His voluntary charity was always much greater than his *zakat*. The reason for showing us this was to make us familiar with giving out.

He made important contributions to many charitable institutions in many places in Anatolia, and even overseas – in the building of mosques, establishment of Qur'an centers, and Imam Hatip high schools. When contributing he would never distinguish between different groups. While travelling through Anatolia if he saw a mosque half built or a tomb of a *wali* which was neglected he would say: "Let us concern ourselves with these".

He would rush to the aid in any matter concerning the Muslims and he would encourage those close to him to do so too. He started up campaigns to help the oppressed in the wars in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Kosovo and he made the greatest contributions himself.

The trait he disliked most was miserliness. He would say that misers could never grow spiritually:

"Generosity is an important trait of our Lord. Without exception all of the prophets, and the Messenger of Allah, the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in particular, the blessed Companions and other great *awliyaullah* adopted this beautiful and elevated trait. It is inconceivable that a person can be a *wali* of Allah and also be miserly. Misers are people who have no worth in the sight of their Creator.

Generosity is the adornment of those who love Allah. Stinginess however is the illness of the worthless and their stain. Generosity is the key to all other beautiful attributes. Miserliness, however, is the key to the lowly which bears all evil"[1212].

Even though our noble master gave out like an ocean, he never attributed this to his own self; he perceived himself as a teller and was always aware that

1212. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, III, 40-41.

it was Allah who allowed him to give out. He taught us by being an example himself, that *adab* and courtesy in giving out was just as important as the act of giving itself. He would give out with the greatest of grace, kindness and complimenting. He would wrap his gift in the best way before giving it. Whenever he was to give someone *zakat* or some other charity he would put it in a new envelope and write a polite sentence on it such as: “Thank you for accepting our offer”. That is, he was aware that before the needy, the charity was accepted by Allah in accordance with the verse: “**(It is Allah who) accepts what is offered as charity**’ (Tawba, 9:104).

This sensitivity that I witnessed since my childhood has established this standard of generosity in my heart. From time to time delicious meals would be prepared in our house on Sundays. My father would make sure that the servants in our house would also eat from this meal. He was aware of the mystery of the verse**: ‘a transaction, which will not prove profitless’** (Fatir, 35:29).

Order and regularity

Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) placed great importance on orderliness and regularity. He did not like disorder and clutter at all. Since order and planning had become a routine part of his life he was never rushed or felt haste to do anything but he always acted with dignity and calm. His heart felt the peace of being in a complete state of submission to the divine will.

He was a man of measure. There was always a measure in his eating, drinking, his dress, his worship, his giving out, his speech, his love, and his dislike. In describing tasawwuf he would say: “Tasawwuf is to spend your time on the most precious things”. From this respect, he saw time as a great bounty and he advised as follows:

“When we contemplate on all creatures in the universe, from the living to the non-living, from the planets to the atoms, we see that everything is in great order. In the face of such divine artistry, the human being, who is the most noble of all creatures, should not be in a state of disorder, giving no regard to his time, and should carry out all his tasks on time”[1213].

1213. See Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, II, 125.

His moderation

One of the most inescapable principles of a life of consistency is to be moderate and not go to extremes. Musa Efendi said about this matter:

“Those who are moderate will also be persevering. They will not give up at the slightest setback. This is also true for the *sayr u suluq*. Those who act in moderation will carry out their duty until the end of their life. Some people get very excited but do not follow through”[1214].

“A small amount of worship done consciously is better than a lot done in heedlessness. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to act in moderation and with measure, rather than doing a lot, and this principle also applies to worship. Sometimes too much worship can lead to fatigue which can cause disgust. Then one loses one’s determination and enthusiasm and reaches a state in which they cannot do even a little. One can expect good from tasks done with caution and prudence but those tasks carried out in haste will fail to lead anywhere...

As a requirement of the divine mercy of Allah, Most High, He has not burdened His servants with a heavy load. He has only willed that His servants perceive their own powerlessness and weakness and worship and obey Him with *adab* and with depth of heart”[1215].

His kindness and elegance

Our Lord bestowed on the nature of Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) a unique regard and love for extraordinary pleasures and elevated beauty. When this beautiful nature of his was combined with the *adab*, good manners and elegance that were the peak of the Ottoman period of Islamic civilisation, he became even more graceful. The beauty that came from tasawwuf crowned it all.

Musa Efendi would show his teacher Sami Efendi (may Allah have mercy on them both) as a model and say:

1214. See *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 148.
1215. See Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, V, 142; II, 98-99; Zahide Topcu, “The late Musa Topbas”, *Sebnem Journal*, issue: 4, p. 112, April-June 2003.

"Our master would speak to everyone without exception, with grace, a smiling face and a sweet tongue. He would never address them by name only but would use a respectful title such as 'bey' or 'efendi'. Unfortunately in our day courtesy has become like the mythical dodo bird. People speak to and treat each other without courtesy and they call this familiarity and warmth. What has rudeness to do with familiarity? Courtesy is born out of warmth. With the exception of those who are pleasant and polite by nature, we find it hard to encounter these rules of courtesy, only in those ladies and gentlemen of Istanbul who has reached the age of 60 or 70 years. Whereas courtesy and good manners are one of the main principles of Islam"[1216].

His contentment and submission

In the eyes of the *awliyaullah*, it is of the utmost importance to be content with the decree of Allah and to submit to it and to rely on Allah always. Musa Efendi said in regards to this matter:

"If the human being really understands that it is Allah who is the sole Lord and Master of all creatures he would realise that people, whatever their station or rank, are weak and powerless and have no power other than a limited ability. They will not rely on those closest to them and not even their children. They will not trust in their wealth nor in their position. They know that every event occurs through the help of Allah. Their knowledge of, devotion to, love for, submission to and reliance upon their Creator will increase, and they will come to a state where they expect nothing from creatures"[1217].

One of the matters which our master most emphasised was submission. He would bow down to Allah and His Messenger's (peace and blessings be upon him) every command, wholeheartedly and say:

"It is only possible to reach a state of peace in this path through submission. Some people are tried and tested with their children, some with their wealth, and others in different ways. The believer can never be completely at ease in this world. Almighty Allah is ever with those who are sorrowed and broken-hearted. Those whose hearts are constricted are ill at ease in every

1216. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, VI, 70.
1217. Sadiq Dana, *ibid*, III, 91-92.

matter and they constrict those around them also. Even if such people perform much extra worship they do not have much of a share in spirituality"[1218].

"Submission to Allah will remove the sorrow and distress in the heart; the spirit will be with the one it loves. The degree of a person's spirituality is in accordance with his degree of submission... Many unwanted, unproductive states come about due to a lack of submission. It increases one's doubts and misgivings"[1219].

Musa Efendi would act with intelligence and discernment in every affair and strive to take all inner and outer precautions. However whatever the result, he would say: "We accept this situation and we are content with it".

His works

The greatest works of the perfect guides are undoubtedly the perfected people they trained and educated. In addition, they penned many beneficial books in order to reach a far greater number of people. Musa Efendi wrote the following books which were about the deeds and acts of tasawwuf:

1) *Heroes of Islam*. This consists of three volumes. The first volume is about the bravery and courageous acts of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), the second and third books are about the heroes who lived in the Seljuk and Ottoman times.

2) *Altınoluk Talks*. This consists of six volumes. It is a compilation of the articles that appeared in the Altinoluk journal.

3) *Sultan al Arifin Shaykh Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu.* This book is about the life and character of his Guide, Mahmud Sami, and contains memoirs from his loved ones. A unique modesty and elegance can be felt in every sentence.

4) *From the world of a Friend of Allah: Suhbah with Khwaja Musa Topbas Efendi.* This is a compilation of the interviews published in the Altinoluk

1218. Zahide Topcu, "Journey to Bursa with Musa Efendi", *Sebnem Journal,* Issue: 9, p. 7, 2004.
1219. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah*, I, 112-114.

during his last year (1996). Important information about his life and world-view are to be found here.

His last days and his return to Allah

The entire life of our noble teacher was spent in the knowledge of the following verse: '*Inna lillah'* ('we belong to Allah'). When he reached his eighties the rest of that verse began to be manifest '*wa inna ilahyhi raji'un'*[1220] ('and we will return to Him').

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The most intense of tribulations comes down on the prophets and then the righteous and other servants in turn..." (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 57/2398).

As an heir of the prophets, Musa Efendi was also tested severely. These trials increase the purity and growth of the believers and also increase their feeling of togetherness and closeness to Allah.

During his last days it almost seemed as if Musa Efendi was preparing inwardly for his meeting with his Lord and other loved ones who had already passed away. Most of the time he could only make eye contact with his visitors and he would give them a look as if to say he was entrusting them to Allah.

In an article he wrote a short time before his death and which was published posthumously he wrote:

"The other day we came eye to eye with Azrail. He appeared smiling, in the guise of an Egyptian, about 40-45 years old, without a beard. I warmed up to him. This must have been a warning that my death was near. Azrail's glance was sharp but he was joyful. He appeared to be bearing glad tidings"[1221].

He had been immobile due to his illness that lasted for two years, and his legs were damaged due to the lack of circulation in them. A day before his death it became necessary to cut off his leg from the knee down due to gangrene. The doctor who performed this operation narrates:

1220. See Chapter Baqara, 156.
1221. "Kendi Kalemlerinden Kısa Terceme-i Hâl', *Altinoluk,* issue: 162, p. 12, August-1999.

"I had really wanted to see him but had never had the opportunity before. Then the responsibility for cutting off his leg fell on me. I heard two little words in that short time: "Allah... Allah". Was not He the sole source of refuge for the people of *dhikr* in times of ease and of distress?"

A day after this operation, on a Friday, the feast of the believers, amongst the calls to prayer in Uskudar, this martyr of divine love breathed his last breath and delivered his spirit to his Beloved. He had always had a special reverence for Fridays. He would dress in white and go to one of the houses of Allah with presence of heart and tranquillity. This Friday was no different. He was dressed in white, but this time he set out for the Owner of those houses, he set out for Allah.

For his entire lifetime, our noble master sought out that 'Elevated Friend' and now it was time to go back to Him.

His blessed spirit parted from his enlightened body and took flight towards the *Rafiq al Ala* on the 16th of July, 1999 on a Friday.

May our Lord reward him with the best of rewards and fulfil his hopes... Amen!

O my Lord! Bestow on us a share of the spirituality of our honourable teacher and guide who spent a life of almost a century on Your path, who did not part from the Qur'an and the Sunnah for even a breath, who considered it an honour to serve this Clear Religion. Grant us success in continuing his precious service. Conclude our fleeting separation with an eternal reunion in the assembly of Your Beloved Muhammad Mustafa in the *Firdaws al-Ala*... Amen!

On the 17th of July, united hearts in the way of Allah flowed in a crowd resembling the Day of Judgement, after the funeral following the noon prayer. At that moment in time, countless numbers of people, all as if one body, had been freed from the anxieties of the world and were feeling the reality of the hereafter, and the prosperity and blessings of being a true servant of Allah. Heads were bowed down, tears were warm and this was a most patent manifestation of the true state required of servanthood.

That epic crowd found it hard to take a step and for those with the eyes to see, they would notice countless angels over them in the form of a cloud of mercy, bidding him farewell as he moved towards his grave.

Finally after completing the 83 years of life which had been given to him in trust, which he filled with countless instances of beauty that pleased His Lord, he came to the gate of the Sahrayi Cedid Cemetery in order to appear before his Lord. This True Friend of Allah who made modesty and humility his mark during his entire life, entered a humble grave. In this spiritual atmosphere which was a mix of sorrow, tears, mercy and peace and with prayers and supplications he joined the eternal resting place of his family friends.

His will

After every good deed he did, Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) would say ‘Alhamdulillah’, and thank his Lord for allowing him to carry out that deed, never once forgetting Him. It is our hope that in giving up his spirit to his Lord in honour, he was able say a last ‘alhamdulillah’ from the heart. He had left behind a last testament which was to be opened after his death by those closest to him. A part of it is as follows:

“O Allah, Creator of the universe, o Owner of the heavens, the earth, the planets and the atoms, human beings, jinn and every creature, elevated of elevated ones, lofty of lofty ones!

When my heirs open this envelope, I will have entered Your divine presence.

You gave me a long life and made Your most precious Friends my guide. You did not deprive me of anything, worldly or otherworldly, and bestowed on me in abundance! Despite all of this, I was unable to serve You as You are worthy of being served and a whole lifetime passed by. Faults and defects followed one after the other. I was not able to grow and develop as I wished. I was only able to find consolation in Your Mercy, Your covering up of my faults and Your forgiveness.

Forgive the sins and mistakes of this lowly, weak servant of yours for he loved You, Your Messenger and those who loved You and who You loved. This was all possible of course through Your grace, favour and help.

Help my heirs and those of my progeny who follow and will follow them. Give all of them strong faith and do not make them of those who are idle so that they can continue their own servanthood and also serve Your servants. Make them people who proclaim Your oneness at every instant of their lives!"[1222].

"Every creature that comes to this world will give its last counted breath at the appointed time, and migrate to the eternal realm. Happy is the one who spends his life in the way of Allah and migrates to the next world in honour. I too, know this matter, but I was unable to carry out my duty properly.

Even though I reached old age I was unable to pull myself together. I read the honourable and pious lives of the great men of Islam but was unable to apply this to my own nafs. After a life of error I hope for the forgiveness and clemency of my Lord Most High, because He is Most Merciful and Most Forgiving. It is my hope that my heirs will evaluate their lives in accordance with Islamic law"[1223].

Words of Wisdom

• "The believer should know that if his good state changes to a bad one, it is the result of a sin that he committed, either knowingly or unknowingly"[1224].

• "The believer should consider any small sin of his to be great. The *awliyullah* see their tiniest slips as being as big as mountains and seek Allah's forgiveness weeping, in deep humility and great sorrow"[1225].

• "The intelligent person is the one who mends the hole in his sack and then fills it. A cracked or holed vessel will not be able to contain whatever you put into it"[1226].

• "The intelligent person should protect himself and those close to him from people of low character and weak religion. He should keep his distance

1222. "In place of his last testament", *Altinoluk,* issue: 162, Front cover sleeve, Ağustos 1999.
1223. "In place of his last testament", *Altinoluk,* issue: 162, p. 20, August 1999.
1224. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* I, 198.
1225. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* II, 63.
1226. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*II, 36.

from them as much as possible. Whoever a person keeps close company with, that person's state and character will easily reflect onto him"[1227].

• "The kernels or seeds that will allow the servant to attain *marifatullah* are ready and waiting in the soil of their body. One needs to be grateful, give thanks, remember Allah and contemplate on Him in order for them to sprout... The beginning of knowledge of Allah is to contemplate on the mysteries in the Divine artistry"[1228].

• "As a result of contemplation done with a sound heart freed from worldly attachments, a human being can learn many aspects of spirituality which it is not possible to learn from a book"[1229].

Almighty Allah says:

وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللّٰهُ

"...Have *taqwa* of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge… (Baqara, 2:282).

• "When trying to teach people of ill character about the religion, one should use a soft and gentle tongue and be humble. One should never condemn or criticise them, for a person who criticises others will end up doing that very same act while still in this world"[1230].

• "It is necessary to learn the religious rulings from righteous scholars. This is because they have *taqwa;* their rulings will be more exact and effective. By the same token, one should avoid as much as possible those worldly 'scholars' who sacrifice their knowledge for rank and position"[1231].

• "Those mothers and fathers who do not teach their religion to their children are the world's most merciless people...To raise children without giving them religious training is like growing a tree in order to burn it in the stove"[1232].

1227. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*II, 33.
1228. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* V, 35-36.
1229. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*II, 89.
1230. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* V, 257.
1231. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*IV, 171.
1232. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* IV, 116-117.

• "If you gather together one hundred incomplete people you will not have one complete person"[1233].

• A Muslim should take his precautions and be careful but never cowardly".[1234]

• "The pioneers of the Sufi path have said that purification of the *nafs* is *fard ayn* (an obligatory act incumbent upon every individual)"[1235].

• "After the obligatory acts the most important form of worship is to conciliate the believers"[1236].

• "There is no greater proof of a person's intelligence, knowledge and mildness than the fact that he is able to get along well with people"[1237].

• "Know this well that the real miracle is to carry out our duty of worship to Allah, remaining distant from ostentation and without expecting anything from anyone, in complete sincerity and submission to Him, until our last breath. That is, true *karamah* is uprightness"[1238].

• "The traveller must on the one hand perform his *awrad* with great precision and care, and on the other hand, carry out the necessary duty of finding the faults and defects of his *nafs*"[1239].

• "The *murshid* loves the traveller (*saliq*) who is merciful, generous and of good character and humble and they are refreshed by them"[1240].

• "There is no great or small promise. To refrain from keeping one's word is a sign of hypocrisy"[1241].

• "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) made debt disliked for the Muslims. Debt in the eyes of a free and healthy person is a heavy load and painful burden"[1242].

1233. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*V, 56.
1234. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 192.
1235. Sadiq Dana, *Altinoluk Suhbah,* VI, 24.
1236. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*I, 9.
1237. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*II, 24.
1238. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,*I, 57.
1239. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* I, 146.
1240. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* I, 191.
1241. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* III, 44.
1242. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* III, 192.

• "All of the acts of worship commanded by Islam are for the benefit and good of the believers. Otherwise Allah, Most High, has no need for them. Allah, Most High, is free of all need and has elevated His servants through His commands and prohibitions and opened up the path for them to rise up. What befalls us weak and powerless people is to properly give thanks for this great bounty"[1243].

• "The true Friends of Allah have taken up as their principle that they take on the heavy load and burden of others"[1244].

• "Our struggle is to serve others, but as simple believers (without expecting leadership)"[1245].

• "One should not ignore the minor things because one is occupied with bigger tasks for when small things accumulate they become great"[1246].

1243. Sadiq Dana, *ibid,* IV, 158.
1244. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 81.
1245. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 82.
1246. *From the world of the Friends of Allah,* p. 105.

GLOSSARY

adab: a word meaning etiquette, courtesy and manners.

adhan: the call to prayer

ahl al Allah – the people of Allah

ahl al bayt – the family of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)

ahyar: 1. People who are good, mature and knowledgeable. 2. One of the states of wilaya.

asfiya: People of sincerity, pure hearts and who take the path that is correct.

abrar: Those who do good, and who are pure and have taqwa.

Ahl al Sunnah: Those who follow the creed of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all).

awrad: 1. The plural of wird, which is a form of dhikr done continually and regularly. 2. Those parts of the Holy Qur'an that are read most frequently.

adhkar: 1. The plural of dhikr. 2. To repeat particular names of Allah as prayer.

fard ayn: Those compulsory acts which every individual is responsible for carrying out.

fard kifaya: Those compulsory acts which need to be carried out by only a number of sufficient people, thereby lifting the responsibility for these acts from others.

fana: To become nothing, annihilation, to eliminate one's ego.

fayz: Spiritual grace, favours and blessings.

hatm-i khwajagan: In the Naqshibandi path, this is a circle

of *dhikr* in which the disciples sit on their knees, with their shaykh and distance themselves from all thoughts other than Allah, devoting their hearts to Allah and on indication from their shaykh, they repeat certain chapters of the Qur'an and names of Allah, based on a certain order and in certain number.

himmah: Spiritual help.

istikhara: a type of prayer performed in order to pray for good before making a decision about an important matter.

karamat: Karamat is the plural of karamah, which is a form of wonder-working, some extraordinary event, similar to a miracle, performed by a wali of Allah.

Khwajagan: 1. Masters of knowledge. 2. The shaykhs and murshids of the Naqshibandi way.

k**halifa:** 1. One who takes on the duty of another, a successor. 2. In the *tariqah*, this is the person who his shaykh finds competent of continuing the duty of guidance.

khushu: is a state of reverential awe that one should feel during the prayer or during contemplation

kibr: is a state of arrogance or pride in seeing oneself better than others.

masiwa, maswiaullah: 1. Everything other than Allah. 2. Things concerning this world.

muraqaba: 1. Watching over and guarding and taking stock of oneself. 2. Inspecting one's inner world and contemplating.

murshid-i kamil: a guide who has perfected his faith and guides others to do the same.

nafs-i ammara: The evil-commanding soul.

nafs-i mutmainna: The soul at peace and contentment, having reached presence with Allah**.**

rafiq al ala: The greatest friend, Allah Most High, or the group of people who are most beloved to him.

riya: ostentation and showing off

riyazat: the plural of riyaza which means to eat and sleep little and be in a state of constant worship, thereby training the nafs and allowing one to oppose its desires. To abstain from the pleasures of the world and live contently.

sadaqa: charity

salat: 1. the ritual prayer.

saliq: 1. Traveller. 2. One who enters upon a path. 3. The traveller who enters the tariq.

suhbah: This word comes from a root word which means company. It is also a spiritual talk that is given to an assembly

suluq: 1. To enter upon a path. 2. To affiliate oneself with a tariq.

tariq: 1. Path, way.

tafwiz: The act of the servant who refers all of his affairs to Allah, and is content with everything that happens as a result, thereby refraining from objecting, with his heart or tongue.

tahlil: To utter the kalima-i tahweed (La ilaha illallah).

tasbih: To say Subhanallah, thereby absolving Allah of all faults.

tawajjuh: 1. To turn to. 2. To show a smiling face.

tawakkul: tawakkul means to put one's trust in Allah and rely on Him and submit to His decree.

'ujub: vanity or self-conceit.

wajd: 1. Losing yourself in divine love. 2. Strong spiritual emotion.

wilaya: the state of being a *wali* or a friend of Allah.

wara': shunning that which is doubtful in order to avoid sinning and unlawful things.

wird: 1. reading a portion of the Holy Qur'an every day; various verses, invocations, prayers and dhikr that are read regularly at certain times in the day. 2. A certain number of *dhikr* that are repeated by the disciple every day.

yaqin: Certain, absolute and complete belief that is free of doubts.

zahid: A person of zuhd, who retreats from the world out of fear of Allah.

zakat: the compulsory donation of 1/40th of one's wealth to the poor and needy. It is one of the five pillars of Islam.

zuhd: The state of not giving the world more value than is its due, to not vie for the world, to be content and give oneself to worship.

CONTENTS

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